

Arkansas Democrat-Gazette Article

↑ kidbrothers.net/articles/arkansas-democrat-gazette-sep95.html

Singer Seeks Other Takes on Christianity

Jack W. Hill

Arkansas Democrat-Gazette

September 1995

Contemporary Christian singer Rich Mullins is practicing what he believes - he's doing more than just recording his music, touring, singing and talking about his faith in God. He recently moved to a Navajo Indian reservation in New Mexico to teach music to children.

"I went to Asia several years ago and enjoyed encountering Christianity from an Asian perspective," Mullins said. "That really challenged me and made me notice the cultural bias we have in parts of our faith."

"The Navajos tend to be more pluralistic than we are. We tend to believe that truth is scientifically verifiable, and they don't believe that"

Mullins, an Indiana native who graduated from a Quaker college, Friends University in Wichita, Kansas, with a double major in music and education, is on a 65-city tour in support of his latest album, *Brother's Keeper*, which features photos and artwork from the Navajo. He is out with what he calls his Ragamuffin Band, a seven-man rock group. Mullins plays guitar, hammered dulcimer and piano in the group.

Brother's Keeper is the eighth album Mullins has released, beginning with a self-titled debut in 1986, following with *Pictures in the Sky* in 1987, *Winds of Heaven ... Stuff of Earth* in 1988, *Never Picture Perfect* in 1989, *The World As Best As I Remember It, Vol. 1* in 1991, *Vol. 2* in 1992, and *A Liturgy, a Legacy*, and a Ragamuffin Band in 1993.

He took inspiration for his band's name from a book, Brennan Manning's *The Ragamuffin Gospel*, which Mullins noted is "not for the super-spiritual, but for ... those who shuffle along on feet of clay; for smart people who know they are stupid and honest disciples who admit they are scalawags."

In 1986 Mullins was the opening act on Amy Grant's *Unguarded* tour. Grant has recorded three of his songs - *Sing Your Praise to the Lord*, *Doubly Good to You*, and *Love of Another Kind*. Debbie Boone has recorded his *O Come All Ye Faithful*, Cynthia Clawson recorded his *If All I Know Is Love* and Tony Melendez recorded Mullins' *Always Here with Me*.

Like the message in one of his favorite movies, Harold & Maude, Mullins loves to celebrate life and its beauties.

"Sometimes it's hard to believe that life is good," he said. "It's not always pleasant, but life is a great gift and your job as a human being is to go out there and live it the best you can. A lot of Christians I know are afraid to live; they're in the midst of huge restrictions on themselves.

"Christianity doesn't answer all my questions or make comfortable and happy. What it does do is give me a context for living."

Opening acts Ashley Cleveland and Carolyn Arends are label mates of Mullins on Reunion Records, a contemporary Christian label based in Nashville, Tennessee.

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Mullins Takes Risk With Show on Saint, but Fans Keep Faith

↑ kidbrothers.net/articles/tribune.html

Monday, April 21, 1997

James P. Long

Rich Mullins epitomizes much of what is best in Christian contemporary music. His signature folk/pop is inventive, evocative, thought-provoking and, at times ambitious. As his concert Friday night at Wheaton College demonstrated, creative ambition has its risks as well as its rewards.

Mullins can craft a song. He can place a work of art in the hands of his audience, framed with sparse instrumentation - grand piano, acoustic guitar and hammer dulcimer played by Mullins and Mitch McVicker on acoustic guitar.

Friday night's stage was bare, but it was not empty. The songs filled it. With today's production techniques, when even a mediocre tune can be transformed into something almost listenable, a good song is its own reward.

Somewhat riskier was the decision to surrender the bulk of the evening to the premiere of the musical "The Canticle of the Plains." Though written by Mullins, McVicker and the guitarist who goes by the single name Beaker, it was performed in its entirety and somewhat unevenly, by an all-collegiate cast. This put Mullins in an awkward role.

"It's really bizarre doing a warm-up act on yourself," he told the audience.

Of course, it's more bizarre for ticket buyers who purchase a \$15 surprise.

Though loosely based on the life and ideals of St. Francis, "The Canticle of the Plains" is set in post-Civil War America. Accordingly, St. Francis of Assisi becomes St. Frank of Wichita, a man out of step with his times, who nevertheless wins a curious following, including the expletive-spitting, one-armed Lefty.

Some of the musical's more poignant moments are those that touch on race relations, such as those involving a young African-American man who, if he must wait for better things, would just as soon not have to wait for them in Mississippi, and those that take up the plight of displaced Native Americans.

To round out a politically correct agenda, much of what is wise and transcendent is conveyed through the voice of three women - one white, one Native American and one African-American and elderly.

The central point, however, is countercultural. Frank's quest for higher ideals carries him into the forgiving love of Christ.

As the evening passed into its third hour, Mullins and McVicker took the stage for an abbreviated closing set.

Mullins stepped to the microphone, smiled and gave folks a gracious out. "It's late," he said. "This would be a good time to go home."

The audience knew better. The show was just beginning. Copyright 1997 by the Chicago Tribune

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Christian Rocker Finds New Life in Desert

↑ kidbrothers.net/articles/tribune2.html

Thursday, April 25, 1996

Lou Carlozo

Rich Mullins' den measures roughly the size of a large walk-in closet, but that hardly stops him from squeezing six people, two guitars, a dulcimer and a golden retriever inside for an impromptu concert.

With his shoulder-length hair and two days' stubble, Mullins hammers the Celtic dulcimer opening to "78 Eatonwood Green," and the cramped scene shatters the crafted public image. This is, after all, the same Rich Mullins who played the Rosemont Horizon last October, whose concert tickets sell by the thousands, whose records sell even more.

As contemporary Christian music explodes into a billion-dollar industry, Mullins seems poised to reach the same pop stardom as Michael W. Smith and Amy Grant. For the last decade, hits have poured from Mullins' pen, including the youth choir favorite "Awesome God."

Mullins' reputation could soar Thursday if he wins Songwriter of the Year at the Gospel Dove Awards. But instead of grabbing for Grammys, gold records or crossover acclaim, Mullins has turned his back on Nashville to pull what might be called a "Mr. Holland's Opus" in reverse.

Living a few hundred yards from the Arizona border in this tiny sheet-metal trailer that rattles in the wind, Mullins is putting down new roots in the desert scrub, teaching music to Navaho schoolchildren.

This relocation is no camping stint or publicity stunt. Mullins has spent five years preparing to make the Navajo reservation his home. But in assessing the most dramatic move of his life, Mullins dispels any notions of sainthood with a slash of self-effacing humor.

"God never spoke to me and said, 'Go to New Mexico,'" says Mullins, 40. "That's why I think it's so ridiculous when people say, 'It's so noble that you're going to New Mexico.' It's no different than when someone says, 'I'm going to flip burgers in Pittsburgh.'"

If it sounds bizarre, consider that Mullins covets a prize no royalty check can buy: spiritual

fulfillment. But Mullins' friends in the Nashville scene wonder whether he might be dodging personal demons instead.

"I don't know if it's because other things capture his interest, or he's afraid of success," says Grammy-winner Ashley Cleveland, who finished a 65-city tour with Mullins last fall. "I wish he'd care more about his career, because here's one person who could reach a lot of people with his sharing of the gospel."

"I don't know if I'm afraid of success; I might be," Mullins responds. "I tend to think success is overrated, that it's something everybody goes after until they get it, then nobody knows what to do with it. Your life speaks louder than your music . . . I can make records for the rest of my life and talk about love, but it won't mean anything until I love somebody."

The dynamics of new life in New Mexico are as complex as Mullins himself, a man who in conversation reveres St. Francis of Assisi, then forgets the name of the sitting U.S. president; who seeks to quench a spiritual thirst and lives on fast-food milkshakes and Diet Coke; who plays dulcimer with a weaver's grace but dismisses himself as a "mediocre" musician; who is finding God in the desert, even while losing his keys in the living room.

Though it may not be Nashville, Mullins' life on the reservation hardly resembles a monk-in-a-hairshirt existence.

Just as Thoreau thrived at Walden Pond, Mullins delights in desert life. With boyish glee, he spends hours plotting to build two earth-and-log cabins ("hogans," as the Navajos call them) behind his trailer. He indulges his rock-climbing passion at nearby locales that include the Grand Canyon. He has ample time for silent reflection or sleeping late.

Unlike the typical transcendental, Mullins has a phone, TV, VCR and plenty of musical instruments for diversion. And a burger burrito stand is an easy walk from his trailer.

"You have to figure out where you're most alive, most vital, and go there," Mullins said, "For some people, that's a music career or being a housewife. For me, it's being here."

Though Mullins has a mission, he's not exactly a missionary. "A lot of people think I've come out here to save the Indians," he said. "For me, it's much more to work out my own salvation with fear and trembling."

Or tremolo. Mullins' ministry is steeped in melody and harmony, not fire and brimstone. On this weekend, Mullins donates his time for three acoustic concerts in a 24-hour period.

The first is the living-room show for relatives of his roommate, vocalist-guitarist Mitch

McVicker, 23. That night, the two musicians render a new song that captures their shared sense of adventure: "Heaven is waiting, just past the horizon / Over the mesas, across the great divide."

Mullins rises the next morning at 8, grabbing the coffee pot before his eyes creep half-open. A quick cup, a shower, and he takes off in his Jeep to the nearby jail, where he performs solo for 50 Navajo inmates.

Others are less obvious outreach candidates, though their need is just as great. Eleven-year-old Jarrod Damon is a cheerful 6th grader who can rattle off constellations in the desert sky the way some boys parrot lines from "Beavis and Butt-head."

Mullins, who met Jarrod three years ago on an earlier New Mexico trip, said the boy's shining personality obscures a past tragedy.

"His father was killed several years ago," he said. "But one thing Jarrod has that a lot of kids don't have is an extended family and involvement in the church."

The boy also has Mullins, who after moving to [New Mexico] last May took Jarrod under his wing.

Jarrod attends a mission Christian School, where 200 elementary students anxiously await Mullins' arrival this fall. The school has no music program, no instruments, no instructor.

"Adding music will be wonderful," said Jilanne Misiewicz, a 1st grade teacher at the school. "A lot of people here don't really know Rich. A lot of the older teachers say, 'Oh, he's just a musician.' They don't understand what we're getting."

Rich Mullins began his music career by accident. The son of Indiana farmers, Mullins was in his late 20s and leading a cash-strapped retreat ministry in Cincinnati when his big break came. "My uncle loaned us \$1,000 to make a custom album so we could fund ourselves," he recalled.

That modest fundraiser began a music miracle. The disc found its way to Nashville, where the song "Sing Your Praise to The Lord" caught the attention of Amy Grant's management. Grant recorded it, netting Mullins a Dove Award nomination. Three years later, he was opening for Grant and recording his first album on Reunion Records.

"It all seems ironic and weird to me," Mullins said. "I'm thankful for it, but I never had any ambitions in Christian music."

"I have no doubt we could be pretty wealthy," says Gay Quisenberry, Mullins' long-time manager. "But we're not trying to buy Rich a bigger house. We're just trying to build him a hogan, and maybe get some music stands."

That Mullins has wandered into the desert when he could break his career wide open "is frustrating at times," Quisenberry said. "But this has been in the game plan for so long."

Mullins first hatched the idea of a full-time mission eight years ago on a trip to Asia. Subsequent tours brought him through the Navajo reservation and clinched Mullins' decision to settle there.

To prepare for teaching, Mullins enrolled at Friends University in Wichita, Kansas. He rented out his Nashville home and lived in an attic until graduating last May with degrees in music and education.

These days, what time Mullins has left for the music business seems to exhaust him. Answering gushing fan letters, he admits, gets tedious. Juggling a month's worth of photo shoots, studio time and concert dates takes on the last-minute urgency of filing taxes.

How or whether Mullins will keep it up are questions he leaves wide open. "If it continues, that'd be fine." Mullins said. "If it doesn't, that'd be fine. I've had more than my 15 minutes."

Rich Mullins: A brief discography

Rich Mullins' music has blossomed in depth and texture since his self-titled first album in 1986 (**) and 1987's "Pictures in the Sky" (**). Both are notable for their piano-and-synth pop charm, though saddled by a low-budget stiffness typical of most 1980s Christian music. There are standouts, though: the vivid ballad "Elijah" from the debut, and the quirky a cappella gospel rave "Screen Door" from "Pictures."

"Winds of Heaven . . . Stuff of Earth" (***) marks a confident leap forward, with the modern-day hymn "Awesome God" and a tender acoustic cover of Dougie McClain's "Ready for the Storm." "Never Picture Perfect" (**1/2) from 1989 - Mullins' first album to place four songs on the Christian charts has a more commercial feel than its predecessor.

"Mullins' next two discs, "The World As Best As I Remember It, Vols. 1 and 2" were mostly recorded together, though released in 1991 and 1992 respectively. Heavily orchestrated and unified by a "faith walk" concept, Vol. 1 (***) and Vol. 2 (**1/2) show Mullins and producer Reed Arvin as craftsmen capable of knitting rich textures around heartfelt melodies such as "Sometimes by Step"

Mullins' 1993 release "A Liturgy, A Legacy and a Ragamuffin Band"****) is his finest achievement. It flows effortlessly from symphonic to Celtic to strident rock (Think of Paul Simon meets The Chieftains, Marc Cohn and Don Henley).

"Brother's Keeper" (***) is Mullins' first album without Arvin at the helm. Here, Mullins takes a satisfying dirt-road turn, stripping back the sound on country-tinged songs such as the title track and "Let Mercy Lead."

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Christian Music Online Album Review

↑ kidbrothers.net/reviews/christian-music-online-nov1898.html

Awesome God: A Tribute to Rich Mullins

Album Review

Robin Parrish

Christian Music Online

November 18, 1998

- Awesome God
- Jacob and 2 Women
- Verge of a Miracle
- Hold Me Jesus
- Calling Out Your Name
- Elijah
- If I Stand
- I See You
- Step By Step

When I first heard about this one, I instantly thought: "Another marketing ploy to take advantage of Mullins' death." Was I wrong? Read on...

There are two features of this album that make it really stand out from other multi-artist collections. The first is that each artist participating got to pick which song they wanted to do, and each of them gets an extensive section in the liner notes to explain their choice and why and how they did their version of it. The second is the extremely appropriate choice of Reed Arvin (long-time Mullins producer) to produce every song on the album.

One of the highlights of the album definitely comes at the very beginning. Michael W. Smith's faithful yet new version of Awesome God is a terrific, soaring anthem; everything you'd expect from Smitty. Next, Carolyn Arends (who was once called the female Rich Mullins) provides a simple version of Jacob & 2 Women, which is much like Mullins himself might have sung it. It's a nice re-do, but nothing particularly outstanding.

Billy Crockett offers another highlight with his typical virtuoso performance of Verge of a Miracle. I have a feeling that Mullins would have loved this one. Hold Me Jesus comes from a slightly surprising source: none other than Amy Grant. I would have thought Phil

Keaggy would get this one, after his touching performance at this year's Doves. But regardless, Amy's version is quite effective. This one sounds like it could have come straight off of Behind the Eyes.

Chris Rice is up next with a somewhat less-known Mullins tune, Calling Out Your Name. It somehow seems fitting that Rice would pick a song that doesn't stand out in the mind over many of the other songs on this album, and then make it shine. Another highlight of the album, with a welcome break from the never-ending ballads. Likewise, another upbeat moment comes from Elijah, by Gary Chapman.

Another timeless classic, If I Stand is done by Jars of Clay. The liner notes tell that they chose not to do this song in their usual style, but "just four men echoing [Mullins'] prayer." The result is a very similar version to Mullins' original. Billy Sprague provides a truly new version of A Place to Stand, that proves quite enjoyable.

Rounding things out, we've got Kevin Smith on an ethereal Save Me, Ashley Cleveland on a stripped-down I See You, and Caedmon's Call on the appropriate closer, Step By Step.

Listening to this incredible collection, one is reminded of just how many incredible songs Mullins left us with. So the answer to the above question is, yes, I was definitely wrong. The singers were all perfect choices to pay tribute to Mullins' life and music, and the music itself is an amazing collection of the legacy of Rich Mullins.

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Still Changing Lives

↑ kidbrothers.net/reviews/releaseaugsep98.html

There was something different about this man. While Christian artists struggled to seem glamorous, Rich Mullins walked onstage barefoot, in jeans and t-shirt. When many were moving to Nashville to enhance their careers, Rich moved to a New Mexico reservation to teach. When most were trying to figure out how to make more money, Rich took a vow of poverty, dedicating most of his income to the poor. Little wonder that when he died last September, the entire Christian music world was overwhelmed with a sense of emptiness.

With *Homeless Man: The Restless Heart of Rich Mullins*, Myrrh Records and Compassion International have created a documentary that remembers this unique man, showcasing his vision and ministry. "We wanted to make something that would point, effectively and beautifully, to Rich's life and passions," says Alyssa Loukota, Rich's good friend and director of communications for Compassion's USA Ministries. "Something that would suggest his loves and struggles and weaknesses and hopes. But more than that.....we wanted to make something that would stir people to action."

Filmmakers Ben Pearson and Jimmy Abegg traveled to Ireland, Great Britain, South America, and throughout the U. S. (including the Navajo Nation reservation in New Mexico where Rich had lived the last several years) to talk to Rich's family, friends, and ministry partners. The result is a richly-textured tapestry of interviews, conversations and recollections, interspersed with clips from one of Rich's last concert appearances.

Homeless Man makes no attempt to paint Rich as a saint. Pearson and Abegg allow the testimony to be honest and respectful, avoiding sentimental reverence. We hear of Rich's "appetite for sin" as well as his "hunger for God". We see him frustrated with aspects of the modern church while deeply committed to it. We see a loner who formed a lay-Franciscan community of young artists and missionaries. We see a man who struggled to listen to and obey God's Word.

At the heart of this tension, *Homeless Man* shows Rich's conviction that the Jesus of the Bible is different from the One most of us serve. We hear Rich onstage rebuking those who would separate Christian discipleship from the fear and suffering in the world around us. We hear of Rich's ability to help (and push) his friends to think outside their safety zones. We see, in the legacy he left through his work with Compassion International, that Rich's vision of Christianity was bearing great fruit.

Viewers are also shown the wealth Rich had in relationships. Normally, a documentary would be notable for the celebrity of its cast - including Amy Grant, Michael W. Smith,

author Brennan Manning and Steve Taylor, among others. But this list seems inconsequential next to the testimonies of nearly-anonymous Columbian street kids; an Irish pastor; Rich's neighbors in the Navajo Nation; his mission partners in South America.

Despite first impressions, Rich was a lover of all things beautiful. As the concert excerpts suggest, his simple lifestyle and commitment to living among the poor made him quite at home with the world. "We all will die," he says on film, "but it's a shame if we all don't live."

As *Homeless Man* makes clear, Rich's whimsy and love of beautiful things were always submitted to the test of "love of and service to God and neighbor." *Homeless Man* sheds light on the nature of that mission in intimate fashion, in a kind, gentle way Rich would have probably liked, challenging us to consider it ourselves. It's an endearing testimony to a man, who, long after his death, will still call us to consider Jesus afresh.

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More Than Music

↑ kidbrothers.net/reviews/releaseaugsep98b.html

Home is the place we long for, our ultimate destination. If we have accepted Jesus as Savior and Lord, Heaven is our home. It eases the shock of losing poet and songwriter Rich Mullins to know that he's reached his home. He left behind not only a legacy, but a challenge: to live for Christ alone.

Rich Mullins: Home is a full-color limited edition book full of memories, both in words and pictures. Included are nearly six years' worth of columns Rich had written for *Release Magazine*. He used the outlet, outside of his songwriting, to further express his musings on faith and life.

"Rich had a way with words," writes Jim Dunning, Rich's manager, in the book's introduction. "A collection of writings seems an appropriate tribute."

The columns, originally published between Spring 1991 and December 1996, included his deep thoughts, provoking spiritual questions, and timely spiritual advice. Rich spoke of our God and His blessed Son with the same gravity, passion, and directness as he did through his music.

A brief biography is included in *Rich Mullins: Home*, giving readers a glimpse of how Rich lived, and how through his 10 albums we can watch his growth as an artist and songwriter. The scrapbook section includes candid photos and assorted quotations that reveal Rich's soul and casual wit. Readers will also discover such interesting facts as Rich's "hidden talent," the word or phrase he most overused, and the worst part of staying in hotel rooms.

In an article reprinted from *Release*, friend and longtime producer Reed Arvin shares how Rich "broke all the rules" to tell the Truth: "If Rich Mullins were better adjusted and better behaved," he writes, "a lot of art would not exist in this world, and a lot of truth would still be unspoken."

The book is beautifully illustrated throughout with the intimate photography of Ben Pearson, a friend of Rich for many years. The photos display Rich at different points of his life and career - a touching glance of the simple yet impassioned life Rich lived.

Rich Mullins: Home is a tribute to the art and to the man. But, more importantly, it's also a challenge for believers to take the stand of faith and live for Christ alone.

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Homeless Man review by The Phantom Tollbooth



tollbooth.org/reviews/rmullinshm.html

Homeless Man: The Restless Heart of Rich Mullins (video)

Label: Myrrh

Time: Approximately 1 Hour

In any good tribute, the viewers are led to a deeper understanding of the person who is the focus of the tribute, and that person's beliefs. This is definitely the case in *Homeless Man: The Restless Heart of Rich Mullins*. It is a must for any Mullins's fan and a wonderful buy for anyone wanting to learn more about the love of God. It would have been nice to see more interviews or concert clips of Mullins, but perhaps they kept it short of things like this to help keep us focused on God and how God worked through Mullins. The video begins by showing a set of hands playing the hammer dulcimer. Then we are guided through a much deeper glance of the man we knew as Rich Mullins and the number one thing in his life. It was wonderful hearing stories about how Mullins use to have jam sessions at his home, how he did the lyrics for his CDs, and other tid-bits people had to tell. One theme that each associate of Mullins shares about him is how he lived by the Spirit. He caused others to want to explore their Bible, know God, and love everything of Him. He had a wonderful way of blending God's Word, human nature, and creation. The star-studded list of volunteers who wanted to share their love for Mullins is amazing and inspiring. Of course, all the Ragamuffins and most of Mullins's close friends are featured (it is painfully obvious that Beaker, Mullins's best friend, co-writer on many songs, and long-time travelling companion, was missing...) It is a joy to see Mitch McVicker, and to see that he is okay after having been involved in the accident which took Rich's life. Each of these special guests tell how Mullins was a reminder, of sorts, to all of Contemporary Christian Music to turn to God. We are also told how *The Jesus Record* was created and how the tape of Mullins's voice "just happened" to be made. Hearing of how Mullins got his nicknames and what he was like as a child was also an interesting insight to the many aspects of Rich Mullins, the man. One of my favorite parts of the video is where Steve Stockman, a university chaplain from Belfast, Northern Ireland, is attempting to explain where Mullins came up with his popular "Irish sweater" story. The important part Mullins explains, "When you wash up on that other shore, even though you've been disfigured beyond any recognition, the angels gonna see you there and they'll go, what is this? we're not even sure, if it's human. But, Jesus will say, no, that's human. I know that one. And they'll say, Jesus, how do you know that one? And He'll say, well, You see that sweater he's got on?" The component of

the video that tugs at the heart strings the most are the clips of the children who saw complete love in Mullins's eyes. One child in particular was trying to hold his grief in so hard that he could barely speak. Many children who were led to Christ from something Mullins did, said, or started are featured in interviews which are touching in many ways. Mullins didn't care about what other people thought, as long as he was glorifying God. Mullins challenged us to not be comfortable in what we were taught about our perfect little worlds as he taught us to strive to be more like God. Since Christ taught us that whatever we've done to the least of these, we've done it unto him, Mullins believed to really be about God's work we had to identify with the poor. God is a Lord of compassion, care, and grace. Mullins showed that more than anyone most of us have ever met.

By Cathy Courtwright

After watching *Homeless Man* the first time, I thought "Well, I'd give it a five for fans and a one if you aren't a fan." The second time I watched it, I was convinced whether you are a fan or not--you need to see this video. *Homeless Man* is a documentary film that serves as a memorial to a truly remarkable man. Alyssa Loukota of Compassion USA Ministries says, "We wanted to make something that would point effectively and beautifully to Rich's life and passions. Something that would suggest to viewers his loves and struggles and weaknesses and hopes. But more than all that, more than just a moving tribute to a good man, we wanted to make something that would stir people to action, to make something that would make us all hunger to know the Jesus Rich loved, and anxious to serve the ones Rich had committed to serve: those Christ called the least of my brothers." *Homeless Man* succeeds here. It is very well done. Interspersed with short clips of Mullins's last concert appearance are reflections on Mullins and his life from his friends, family, fellow artists, and ministry partners. The video doesn't glorify Mullins but tries to understand him as a human being. The more I see the video, the more I realize how much Rich Mullins pursued God with what seems like a restless abandonment. He truly lived the Gospel. My life seems to fall so short compared to his. I think I'm going to need to see this video periodically the rest of my life to remember why I'm here and where I should be going. Rich Mullins may be gone, but his message lives on in *Homeless Man*. It is a wonderful testimony of what he was always trying to tell us. Hopefully, some day we will get his message and starting living that way too.

By Shari Lloyd

A Rich Mullins review by The Phantom Tollbooth



tollbooth.org/reviews/rmjr.html

The Jesus Record

Artist: Rich Mullins and a Ragamuffin Band

Label: Myrrh Records

Time: 2 CD set 32:39 and 46:09

A legacy of sorts has finally come to an end. This cessation of that legacy has been made painfully obvious with the release of Rich Mullins's last project, *The Jesus Record*. And yet, as I listen to this CD, my hope is still turned to something more. Something higher than any of this pain could be, higher than anything any of us could be. That, after all, is part of the legacy we've been left with, the part of the legacy that will never decay.

The Jesus Record was started almost two years ago as Mullins wanted to share Jesus with the entire world. As Rich Mullins wrote more and played various songs for more and more audiences, the project became something Mullins realized he had to record. It is a project that just like Mullins, is fully focused on Jesus. Friends recall Mullins knowing that this was not only a project that we as a world needed, but a project he and his fellow Ragamuffins needed also.

So, that is where *The Jesus Record* started. Mullins called together the Ragamuffin Band--Rick Elias, Mark Robertson, Jimmy Abegg, and Aaron Smith--to decide who was going to sing what lines..... You see, in Mullins's humbleness, he wanted the project to be an equal collaboration with all of the Ragamuffin Band. Through many discussions, they convinced him that it was his voice that people wanted to hear and he should take all leads. On what seemed to be a whim, one day Mullins, with a small group of friends gathered around, did an impromptu "concert" as the songs were recorded on a crude boom-box. Sadly (in human terms), Rich was called from this earth about two weeks after this recording was made. Keeping with Rich's wishes, his fellow Ragamuffins decided this project must be completed. So, through many hours of grief, struggle, tears, healing, meekness, prayer, and most importantly, grace from God, they did it! The Ragamuffins actually produced a CD worthy of the Rich Mullins's name, the Ragamuffins's time, and the fans's attention. This is *The Jesus Record*--that is whom it is about.

The first disc is that crude tape made from the boom-box. It has been cleaned up quite a bit and has a unique sound. The quality of the tape almost sounds like one of those old records you listened to as a child with the headphones blasting

away in your ears. In both cases, you held the headphones so close, longing to be where that person was and knowing it just could not be. Those emotions were part of a man and cannot be separated even after death. Mullins was never one to half-heartedly do anything. This "impromptu concert" was no exception to his rule. Having seen Rich Mullins in concert several times, I can almost relive the feelings that were put into each concert as I listened to the first disc. One interesting part of this disc is that between each song you hear the click of the tape player as it is being shut off as well as some small applause as Mullins humbly giggles.

The second disc is perhaps more of how Mullins would have envisioned *The Jesus Record*. It is a collaboration of the voices of Jimmy Abegg, Rick Elias, Mark Robertson, Ashley Cleveland, Michael W. Smith, Amy Grant, Phil Keaggy, and, through the wonder of modern technology, Mr. Rich Mullins. Nine out of the ten songs on this half of the project were on the first. Although they have the same authors, and are basically the same, they sound much more radio ready.

By far my favorite song on the project is "Hard to Get". Elias sings The Ragamuffins's version of the most emotionally difficult song on the project. In Mullins's version, with his acoustic guitar, we are reeled into a whirlwind of emotion as we hear some of our deepest fears come to life. Mullins emotionally sings:

*You who live in Heaven
hear the prayers of those of us who live on earth
Who are afraid of being left by those we love and who get hardened by the hurt
Do you remember when you lived down here where we all scrape
to find the faith to ask for daily bread
Did you forget about us after you had flown away
Well, I memorized every word you said
Still I'm so scared I'm holding my breath
while you're up there just playing hard to get.*

This song holds so much emotion I almost find it hard to listen to. It is also the last song Mullins wrote, sort of a prayer that he left for us. A cry to God about the shivery silence we sometimes feel. The main lines of the song change at the end from "While you're up there just playing hard to get" to "It's just your ways and you are just plain hard to get". A nice play on word sounds that hits us hard.

The Ragamuffins's version of "All the Way to Kingdom Come" features Phil Keaggy's vivacious lead vocals. He is joined by the Ragamuffins in what could be the most sprightly song Mullins ever wrote. Mullins's version finds him accompanying himself with an acoustic guitar. As the song entertains us, it shows us some of the error in what we look toward Jesus for at times.

*We were looking for heroes
He came looking for the lost
We were searching for glory and He showed us a cross
Now we know what love is 'cause He loves us all the way to kingdom come.*

"Jesus...." brings us back to Mullins's world of sweet love ballads. The Ragamuffin side of the CD features Ashley Cleveland singing a hushed version of "Jesus....," in a way that is all Cleveland. It is a hushed song that turns our hearts back toward what Mullins's heart was and ours should be. A song of deep longing for Jesus to touch and heal our spirits.

No matter where it is placed on the project, the pace speeds up with a song Mullins performed on several occasions during his last summer on earth. Three of the Ragamuffins share vocals on "You Did Not Have a Home"--Abegg, Elias, and Robertson. This version steers from Mullins tradition in that it is a bold, folk instrumentalization (slightly rock-a-billy) that includes a dobro, a harmonica, and an accordion. The song focuses on the human part of Jesus who could have been a king and yet had nothing, owned nothing, and died with nothing. "You Did Not Have a Home" also reminds us of that playful part of Mullins who is one of the few artists we know that would actually include the word ass (donkey) in one of his songs and be upset that people felt uncomfortable playing it on the radio.

"Heaven In His Eyes" probes what is possibly the most delightful aspect of the incarnation--the fact of who Jesus was/is. The second version finds Michael W. Smith joining the Ragamuffins in one of Smith's best vocals to date. This song reminds us of the secret of Jesus's death:

*Those who see the vision that He saw
This is why a man as Holy as He had to die alone on Calvary
It was the only way we could ever see the Heaven in His Eyes*

"Nothing is Beyond You" is a messianic reading of Psalm 139. It reminds us that "death has lost its sting because nothing is beyond you". It's a song about the "relentless love" of Jesus. For Amy Grant (lead vocals), the song has a certain line that slays her every time she hears it. The special line that exemplifies the theme rushing through the project is, "I cannot explain the way that you came to love me, except to say that nothing is beyond You."

My favorite track of the second project is a lively song called "My Deliverer." The song starts off deliberately slow. After the first verse, a chorus of people join with lead singer Rick Elias, and by the time the second verse starts, the listener doesn't know what has hit them. You find yourself listening to a fast, upbeat praise of "My Deliverer is coming/My Deliverer is Standing by". This is a song that surpasses the emotions packed into Mullins's best known song, "Awesome God." By the end of the number, the listener finds himself, joyfully looking

forward to seeing our deliverer. Mullins's version of "My Deliverer" does not have the radio sound of the Ragamuffin version, the part that was recorded at Abbey Road. But, his singing is done with complete soul that extends even to his keyboard.

There are two tunes on *The Jesus Record* not written by Mullins. Those of you who have seen Rich Mullins and the Ragamuffins in concert will remember a song being introduced as one of Mullins's favorites. "Man of No Reputation" is a Ragamuffin Elias original. Like the rest of the CD set, this one quilts together the themes of Christ's humility, affection, and triumph of grace. They did not have a tape of Mullins singing this song. Therefore, only the second project has this song. The second of the two songs not written by Mullins, "Surely God is with Us" is written by a friend of Mullins, Beaker, and Ragamuffin Mark Robertson (lead vocals). This song depicts Jesus as someone who hangs out with sinners. Sinners such as you and I. This theme is perhaps why Mullins chose the song. The title is repeated throughout the song, causing it to sort of jump out of the speakers and remind us that God is with us.

"That Where I Am, There You..." is a perky, camp-fire-ish song, completely from the Gospels. I found it appropriate that the songs end with all the guests joining Rich Mullins in a new sing along. They took Rich's voice and dubbed it onto the Ragamuffin version, you can even hear him playing his guitar. It's a joyful song that takes us off of the human pain we felt with the death of Mullins and flings our thoughts onto the fact that Jesus has prepared a place for us. It's a heavenly, inspiring, majestic song that

lifts your spirits and makes you so glad to have been part of this wild thing that we call the "Love of God." The second disc has Mullins playing his dulcimer to "Nothing but the Blood of Jesus." Then, for one last time, on both versions, we hear applause for Mr. Mullins and hear him humbly laugh as he wonders why all the attention...

Being a two CD set, this project will undoubtedly be held to higher standards than most. If you are even slightly a Rich Mullins fan, there is a resounding "yes, purchase this record!" in your mind. But, if you are not a fan, this project still holds wonderful examples of greatness. The best part of it is that the project is not about a man or even a mans death. It is beyond us and into eternity. It is...*The Jesus Record*.

By Cathy Courtwright

Often an artist sees one project as central to their whole body of work. Such was

this album to Rich Mullins. Though he didn't live to record it properly, his determination to complete this work rubbed off on his Ragamuffin bandmates, and they resolved to complete it as a tribute to Mullins. Underneath the tasteful packaging lie two CDs--one containing a cleaned up version of nine demos Mullins recorded on a small cassette recorder for a group of record executives, and the other a polished set of studio recordings of those tracks and a couple from the pen of producer and Ragamuffin Rick Elias.

Everyone I've come across who received pre-releases of this double album faced a dilemma...which disc to listen to first? Along with most of them, I chose the demos disc first. While it was cleaned up in the studio, it is still extremely raw, of a quality that would never normally be released even as an indie. As the CD began to play, the quality did bother me, as the levels weren't quite right (too bass or treble heavy in places). As the CD continued I was able to move beyond that--an oftquoted rule in songwriting is that a great song will still sound good when stripped back to acoustic guitar or piano. These are great songs. Mullins's voice is passionate and clear; while the instruments are often a little distorted and there is the distinctive sounds of a home recording, there is a charm about this disc. I am not sure how often this will get listened to, but it is a good souvenir to remember Mullins by--his unassuming nature and determination to communicate the truth he had found. Lyrically, profundity and simplicity meet in a powerful way. Not every line sparkles, but the overall effect is a set of songs which show Jesus from many angles and build up a picture of the duality of man and God which Jesus embodied.

The other recording is quite different. Featuring the London Session Orchestra, Amy Grant, Michael W. Smith, Ashley Cleveland, and the Ragamuffin band, it is certainly an all-star recording. I must confess that I found the first track, 'My Deliverer,' to be slightly over-done with the powerful string section seeming to contrast a little too strongly with Mullins's original. From there on things get more relaxed, and my initial fears were relieved. Some of the rough edges to Mullins's arrangements are balanced out, and the rootsy sound matches most of the songs well. I sometimes find that producer Rick Elias has a tendency to overproduce drums, and I feel that has happened here--a rawer drum sound would have worked a little better. This is still a well thought-out and put-together package and is a strong testimony to Rich Mullins.

By James Stewart

Rich Mullins' Last Musical Vision

↑ kidbrothers.net/reviews/tribune4.html

Lou Carlozo

June 28, 1998

On a carefree day late last summer, Christian singer-songwriter Rich Mullins entered an abandoned church in Elgin, cheap boombox in hand, to record demos for his next album. Mullins was excited about the material, a collection of songs about Jesus. But he was also absent-minded, and forgot to release the pause button.

Faced with starting over, Mullins could have left the recording for another day. He had an open invitation to tape his songs at the fancy recording studio next door, where his roommate Mitch McVicker was completing his first album. But Mullins had taken a shine to the fire-damaged chapel, and he didn't want to interrupt McVicker's project. So Mullins ran through the songs again, then took the crude tape home with him to New Mexico, where he played it for Myrrh Records executives and producer Rick Elias.

"He put it in one cassette deck and it wouldn't play," Elias recalled. "The tape got caught in the deck; he stared pulling on it and there was all this tape coming out. I rewound it with a pencil and said, 'You'd better put it in another deck before it breaks.'"

Last year on Sept. 19, Mullins, 41, was killed and McVicker seriously injured in a car accident near Peoria. And that nearly eaten tape, made less than three weeks earlier, now stands as the last recording of original music Mullins made.

Now, Mullins fans will get to hear the tape for themselves. On June 30, Myrrh plans to release "The Jesus Record," a two-CD set with Mullins' demos on disc one, and studio versions performed by his backup band the Ragamuffins on disc two. Guest vocalists include Michael W. Smith, Amy Grant (Mullins penned her 1982 hit "Sing Your Praise To The Lord"), Phil Keaggy, Ashley Cleveland and Elias.

While many posthumous releases smack of a last-chance cash in, "The Jesus Record" is clearly cut from a different cloth. By all accounts, Mullins had insisted before his death that the record needed to be made. It was also the first time, as far as his backing musicians can recall, that he had demoed an entire project from beginning to end.

Mullins had given the demo tape to Myrrh vice president Jim Chaffee, who took it with him to Nashville to make copies for studio musicians and label personnel. After Mullins' death, it was immediately cleaned up and transferred to compact disc to preserve it.

By keeping rough demos and polished studio cuts on separate discs, "The Jesus Record" gives listeners a fascinating glimpse into the bookends of the recording process. It also unveils eight new compositions written or co-written by Mullins. The Ragamuffins and friends also contribute two tracks that Mullins had hand-picked for the disc.

Mullins' solo tracks, performed on acoustic guitar and piano, may contain bumpy moments, but they are far from throwaways. His voice bristles with desperation on "Hard To Get," a psalm of lament against God's silence. And it's haunting to hear Mullins sing the upbeat refrain of "My Deliverer": "My deliverer is coming/ My deliverer is standing by."

On the studio disc, Elias does a commendable job of translating Mullins' vision into a fitting coda. His production style is more commercial than Reed Arvin (Mullins' longtime producer) and occasionally overwrought, but Elias has a knack for matching the guest vocalist to the right song. Cleveland turns in a showcase performance on "Jesus," and Keaggy brings abundant Beatlesque joy to "All The Way To Kingdom Come." Credit Elias for rendering an album that could have easily drifted to the maudlin or sentimental side, but stays crisp and upbeat.

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Rich Mullins Musical at Friends University



kidbrothers.net/reviews/cotpreview.html

"Canticle of the Plains," Friends University Campus Ministry and Tapestry Performing Arts

Diane Samms Rush

October 11, 1997

The sacredness of life. The unique gifts of all creatures. The need to connect to God, the ground of all being.

These are some of the themes of "Canticle of the Plains," the musical left behind by Rich Mullins, contemporary Christian singer and Friends University graduate who died Sept. 19 in a car accident in Illinois.

In two weeks, his friends at Friends produced the play that he had seen only in rough form, bringing to life his story of St. Francis of Assisi set in 1880s Kansas.

In many ways, the story was autobiographical, the actor friends said, reflecting the theology of its author and calling to the fore some of his most fervent concerns about the church and the life of faith.

"Too many buildings and not enough churches," says Ms. Johnson, portrayed by Laketta Corner, early in the play. She had just explained that the burned-out church she was sweeping was where she worked as custodian but was not welcome as a worshiper.

"Sometimes God works through hurts, through wounds," is the message for Lefty, who lost an arm to a cougar. Lefty ponders whether his resistance to the cougar's nature was to blame for his loss.

As Franklin "Frank", the main character, portrayed by Kevin Brocksieck,

takes his friends on a pilgrimage to a place between the four sacred mountains, we hear, in word and song, a theology of hope and gratitude, pulled through the struggle of faith.

Brocksieck stepped in for Mitchell McVicker, 24, a co-writer of the play and Mullins' companion in the fatal accident. McVicker suffered head injuries and was released from a Peoria, Ill., hospital only a few days ago.

It was clearly a labor of love for the 22 actors, singers and dancers who made sure that "Canticle" was staged on schedule.

Under the direction of Nicole-Capri Brocksieck, the production was smooth, well-paced and compelling.

The sparse sets gave the play an uncluttered feel, and the use of video and light images were exclamation marks for some of the more powerful lines.

Singing was superb, especially that by Corner, Robert Barnes as "Buzz" and Jared Brown as "Ivory."

Dancers in the background set a texture without drawing away from the actors downstage.

Mullins would have been proud of how his friends completed his work.

Additional performances are at 2 and 7:30 p.m. today at Alexander Auditorium, Whittier Fine Arts Building on the Friends University campus. Tickets range from \$6 to \$8; call 295-5746.

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Rich Mullins and the Kid Brothers of St. Frank Canticle of the Plains

Steve Rabey

Since he died more than 750 years ago, St. Francis of Assisi has inspired hundreds of books, paintings, compositions and movies. But the beloved saint has never prompted anything like Canticle of the Plains, a bold and beautiful music which transforms Francis into Frank and moves him from medieval Italy to the wild west of 19th-century America, a setting that has inspired its own share of art and music.

Created by Rich Mullins, longtime Mullins collaborator Beaker and Mitch McVicker (who together make up the Kid Brothers of St. Frank), the album boasts performances by Mullins' Ragamuffin Band, Jimmy Abegg, and Mark Robertson and This Train, as well as featured vocals by Sixpence None the Richer's Leigh Bingham Nash and DC Talk's Kevin Smith and Michael Tait.

Canticle is an audacious move for Mullins, an artist who has previously been content to toy with the boundaries of contemporary Christian music but now blows them to smithereens. There's no strict chronology of Francis' life here. Instead, the emphasis is on Franciscan principles such as deep-rooted mysticism that sees the hand of God in the sun, sage and sand, the creativity to express this way in "Heaven in Waiting," the album's first single: "My savior's calling and I'm listening/Time to saddle up my pony and ride."

Nor is there strict adherence to any one musical style. Bingham sings "Buenos Noches from Nacogdoches" to a mariachi accompaniment, while Tait belts out "Oh My Lord," a moving description of Christ's passion, over a gritty blues-rock background. But it all hangs together, thanks to the

player's passion and professionalism.

Some won't get it and will pray that Mullins returns to more conventional fare. But others will hail Canticle as the trailblazing journey into brave new musical territory that it is. If you can't find Canticle in a store near you, send \$16.50 for CD and shipping to Kid Brothers of St. Frank, 313 N. Hillside, Wichita, KS 67214.

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Sandy Smith

Songs Reunion * * * &1/2

Unlike most other Christian music artists, Rich Mullins does not swim in the shallow end of the pool. His music has always served to challenge and convict while offering unabashed praise. Nowhere is this more evident than on Songs, a 16-song collection of mostly old material. As is standard with any "greatest hits" package these days, there are two new renditions and one completely new song.

No one will call Mullins an outstanding vocalist, but he sings with such passion that musical imperfections can easily be overlooked. But Mullins' strength has always been as a songwriter. While a college student, he wrote "Sing Your Praise to the Lord," an early Amy Grant hit that she helps him re-record here. (Grant omitted the midsection on her recording; Mullins revives it here.) He also updates "Elijah" and adds the new "We're Not as Strong as We Think We Are," a song that's not as strong as they apparently thought it was. That's OK, because there are plenty of other great tunes, like "Awesome God" and "Screen Door." Whether he's slurring his song titles, as on "Alrightokuhhuamen" or picturing Jesus as a child in "Boy Like Me," Mullins defies all that is typical in Christian music. And that's what makes Songs such a delight.

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The Lighthouse Electronic Magazine Album Review

↑ kidbrothers.net/reviews/lighthouse-electronic-magazine-jul95.html

Brother's Keeper

Album Review

Vanessa L. Crooks

The Lighthouse Electronic Magazine

July 1995

Find a quiet place and lose yourself in the wonder of Rich Mullins' Brother's Keeper. Far from being a summer driving album - one to jam with down the highway, windows open and top down - Brother's Keeper is a mellow, reflective, front porch kind of recording, great for pondering and relaxing as the sun sinks over the rim of the horizon.

Joining Mullins is a reconfigured Ragamuffin Band; featuring Beaker, Jimmy A, and Rick Elias, veterans with "former muffin experience," as well as the talented Phil Madeira, Lee Lundgren, and Aaron Smith. As always, Mullins has created an infectious blend of pop and folk with eclectic Appalachian, country, and heartland influences. Although the project retains the Ragamuffin Band as its base, it is less of a musicians' project than A Liturgy, a Legacy, and a Ragamuffin Band. Mullins does not try to impress us with the dark and luxurious textures that set the stage on his recent projects. Here he offers a simple (though not simplistic) composition as the foundation for his painting. The effect, however, is just as powerful.

Let Mercy Lead is profound in its auditory and intellectual impact. Utilizing a strong guitar base, both acoustic and electric, with bass, drum, and B-3 organ augmentation, Mercy constructs a harmony as catchy as any Mullins has crafted. Written for Beaker's young son, Aidan, Mercy challenges us to accept the compassion and forbearance that God provides to aid us in completing "...the race that takes us way beyond all our trials and all our failures." Gone from prominence is the dulcimer, which has been Mullins' signature since 1989's Never Picture Perfect; only on Eli's Song do we hear its subtle, sweet strains.

Brother's Keeper's tone is drawn primarily from a variety of guitars, the B-3 organ, the accordion, and some unusual percussion arrangements and rare instrumentation (when's the last time you heard a lenophone or hooter?). Needless to say, this album doesn't suffer from the trite or vapid hooks that plague so much of today's pop music. Mullins gift for diversity of sound is evident in the inclusion of both the Jimmy Buffet-esque Eli's Song and the Charlie Daniels casted Quoting Deuteronomy to the Devil (the latter makes it onto

the top-ten most interesting song titles list, alongside "The Maker of Noses"). Brother's Keeper is a quirky, witty, and warm addition to Mullins' catalog of projects.

Mullins has always been an artist who wrestled with God, and much of his work has revealed raw and passionate insights into the human condition. But much like Margaret Becker's transformation on Grace, it seems like Mullins also has reached a plateau of encouragement and serenity. Hatching of a Heart finds him transcending his erudite tendencies and relishing.

the strength that comes from friendship

...the warmth that comes from hope

...the love that time can't diminish

as well as giving God praise "for all that makes for the hatching of the heart." Cry the Name has the intensity that one has come to expect from Mullins, yet his call is tempered with the knowledge of God's abiding love:

I cannot cling to the shadows again

So here on this altar tonight

I lay every dream, I've ever dreamt

To burn in the fire He lights

And I cry out the name of the One who loves me.

This is not just a departure in sound for Mullins, but a departure in mood as well.

If you're looking for an album that picks up where A Liturgy, a Legacy, and a Ragamuffin Band left off, you're not going to find that in Brother's Keeper. But if you're willing to follow Rich Mullins on his trek to this new vista, I think you'll agree that the peaceful, pensive, and praiseworthy view was well worth the trip.

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CCM Magazine Album Review

↑ kidbrothers.net/reviews/ccm-sep95.html

Brother's Keeper

Album Review

Melissa Riddle

CCM Magazine

September 1995

What Rich Mullins has unearthed in his latest release, *Brother's Keeper*, is rich in the lyrical wisdom we have come to expect and the simplicity that makes Mullins uncommonly good for the soul. Continuing with the Ragamuffin Band (sans Reed Arvin and a few others from the A Liturgy project), *Brother's Keeper* is a milieu of earthy life-verses which reflect the struggle of letting go. Letting go of pride, judgment, and apathy, letting go of our children and letting mercy lead, letting go of our own will to hatch from our shells and learn to fly, letting go of the past to join the joyful promenade, letting go of the wounds of love to find a faith of healing, and even letting go of life to find it eternally. Through his music, Mullins shares the rich truth that "although...foolish hearts may break/They will find peace," that to surrender is to live "I cannot cling to shadows again/So here on this altar tonight/I lay every dream I've ever dreamt/To burn in the fire He lights" (from "Cry the Name").

There is also an undercurrent of praise and thanksgiving that gives *Brother's Keeper* its power. *Damascus Road*, a song of praise for a totally transformed life, sums up the entire effort: "But if my darkness can praise your light/You give me breath/And I'll give my life/To sing your praise." It could be the song of Saul. It could be the song of us all.

Other highlights include: *Brother's Keeper*, a declaration about being human, the humanness of us all, and unconditional acceptance and *The Hatching of a Heart*, a metaphor for maturing in Christ.

Though not as uniquely encompassing and otherworldly as *A Liturgy*, *a Legacy*, and *a Ragamuffin Band*, *Brother's Keeper* stands on its own musically, heralding again the inspired idea that brought such talented, unconventional players together.

What was noble and moving church music in the *Liturgy*, *Legacy* project has walked out into the street and into the house. This is where we live. Or it should be.

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Brother's Keeper

↑ kidbrothers.net/reviews/bkreview.html

He really did it. For years, Rich Mullins has been threatening to earn his B.A. in Music Education and teach on the Navajo Reservation. This May, adorned in cap and gown, Rich took his degree from Friends University in Wichita, Kansas, and the very next day moved lock, stock, and Bible to the Navajo reservation in New Mexico. Which begs the question: how could a man with a thriving music career, eight #1 radio singles and a #1 album under his belt, chuck it all for life in the rust-red canyons and mesas of the southwest? Answer: he isn't. As his new Reunion album, BROTHER'S KEEPER, amply shows, Rich is at the top of his game, and rather than curtailing his dual life, he plans to expand it.

In fact, this fall, Rich will kick off one of his biggest concert extravaganzas yet, the "Brother's Keeper Tour,-- which also features Ashley Cleveland and Carolyn Arends. Sponsored by the International Bible Society, which has pioneered a new missionary outreach to Native Americans, the tour takes Rich to 65 cities in less than three months. It may seem an exhausting itinerary, but when an artist has something important to say, somehow he finds the energy. And with his new album, Rich Mullins speaks volumes. A testament of faith and forgiveness, BROTHER'S KEEPER surely ranks among his best.

Coming on the heels of 1993's A LITURGY, A LEGACY, & A RAGAMUFFIN BAND, the new album is a bit of a departure. "We deliberately decided not to write with a common thread,-- says Rich. "We said, 'Let's just kick back, say what's on our minds, and not worry about being philosophers or commentators."

Rich wrote or co-wrote all ten tracks, most with his long-time friend Beaker, and co-produced the album with his bandmates: guitarist/bassist Jimmy Abegg, guitarist Rick Elias, drummer/guitarist Phil Madeira, keyboardist/percussionist Lee Lundgren, and drummer Aaron Smith. Sharing the producer spotlight with his colleagues was an easy call for Rich. "So many musical ideas on this album originated with each of the guys in the band,-- he says. "And I've always believed in the 'No man is an island' point of view. So it just seemed right to name them as co-producers."

The album kicks off with the title track, a lilting up tempo ballad about love and acceptance. That segues to "Let Mercy Lead," a song addressed to Beaker's newborn son. Nothing we were attempting was good enough for his kid," laughs Rich. "Finally, we came up with this." The song's intriguing reference to the "foolishness of God" comes from the writings of G.K. Chesterton. "When we see the way God loves us, it doesn't make

sense, especially to victims of the Enlightenment" notes Rich. "But God goes beyond reason."

"Hatching of a Heart" is a phrase borrowed from the late Catholic theologian Thomas Merton. Says Rich, "I try to allow myself to encounter God in the everyday things: making the bed, building a shelf, learning to play the viola. There is glory even in the mundane, but we always seem to think it has to do with mountains."

The next track, "Promenade," is a Cajun-flavored fable of the revival on the hill, while "Wounds of Love" is a passionate and deeply personal musical love letter.

"'Damascus Road' was written the night my fiancée broke off our engagement" says Rich. "I knew I was going to become depressed, so I figured, before that, I'd make an honest effort to say, 'Blessed is the name of the Lord.'"

With its haunting intro and spirited verses, the psalm-like "Cry The Name" draws on Rich's connection with Native American culture and his own Celtic heritage while evoking a sense of oneness with the natural world. Written in Ireland, "The Breaks" is according to Rich, "an uncomfortable love song," while the album's closer, "Quoting Deuteronomy to the Devil" is a rousing Delta blues number particularly close to Rich's heart. "I don't trust snake handlers or preachers that scream at me," he says, "but I admit there's something intriguing about it. It was a total blast to write and record this track."

For someone who describes himself as "a born dissenter," Rich Mullins seems to have a lot of fun making music and sharing the Gospel. Born in rural Indiana and raised on a farm, Rich Mullins was one of those kids who always loved going to church. "I was attracted to the music as well as the message," he says. "Eventually I joined the choir, which toured all across the Midwest." Rich fused his twin loves of music and Christ, deciding early on to seek a career as a Contemporary Christian artist. He made his recording debut with his 1986 self-titled Reunion album, followed by seven lavishly praised albums, including Pictures in the Sky (1987), Winds of Heaven ... Stuff of Earth (1988), NEVER PICTURE PERFECT (1989), The World As Best As I Remember It, Volume 1 (1991), the #1 smash The World As Best As I Remember It, Volume 2 (1992) and A Liturgy, a Legacy, and a Ragamuffin Band (1994).

Among his #1 hits on CCM radio charts are "Verge of A Miracle," the enormously popular "Awesome God" (voted one of the most popular Contemporary Christian songs of the decade), "My One Thing," "While the Nations Rage," "Boy Like Me, Man Like You," "Sometimes By Step," "Creed," and "Hold Me Jesus." He has scored nearly a dozen Gospel Music Association Dove Award nominations, and was the writer of Amy Grant's hits "Sing Your Praise to the Lord," "Doubly Good to You," and "Love of Another Kind."

Rich has toured all around the world before an estimated half-million fans. His 1994 long-form video release, *pursuit of a legacy*," included four original concept videos as well as Rich's wry reflections on his life, his faith, and his music.

But these days, Rich is not looking back. His new album and upcoming tour have him excited as never before. "I'm a big fan of Ashley Cleveland and Carolyn Arends," he says, "and it's a thrill to be going out with them."

Beyond his immediate music career goals, Rich is equally looking forward to life on the reservation. "The image of the shepherd is important in Christianity," he notes, "and for me to live among a shepherding culture may increase my understanding of Christ, who is my shepherd. As a teacher, I hope I can give these kids an opportunity to win. Kids naturally want to be productive, and music gives them something to be good at."

Motivated both by his love of people and his love of God, Rich has influenced countless lives with his examples of humor, compassion, joy and humility. If anyone seeks a living, breathing model of what it means to be a brother's keeper, the search can end with Rich Mullins.

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A Liturgy, a Legacy, and a Ragamuffin Band Album Review

↑ kidbrothers.net/reviews/alalaarreview.html

October 1995

You could say Reunion recording artist Rich Mullins suffers from an embarrassment of riches. He confesses to being more human than the most human of us yet somehow seems more saint than the most saintly. His wisdom comes from a home-spun cache of memories and legacy, his poetry from eyes and ears open to a wider world and his music is a smattering of sage and child, scholar and ragamuffin.

Most artists strive for recording perfection, but Rich Mullins would rather have you hear some "rough around the edges" music on his newest album, A Liturgy, A Legacy and a Ragamuffin Band. Those footfalls and meanderings are the backbone of a recording project he sees as a celebration of a faith that finds its home in imperfect humanity, and in a God whose love, as Rich says, "is not contingent on the goodness of the people He loves."

That theme in mind, Mullins assembled what he affectionately dubbed The Ragamuffin Band (a term borrowed from author Brennan Manning), a rag-tag gathering of some of Christian music's best players who shared Mullins' desire to make artistically sound music without giving in to "studio slickness." The Ragamuffins include Billy Crockett, Rick Elias and Jimmy Abegg on guitars, producer Reed Arvin on keyboards, friend and songwriting partner, Beaker, on mountain dulcimer, Lee Lundgren on accordion, Danny O'Lannerghy on acoustic bass, drummer Chris McHugh and percussionist Eric Darken.

The resulting album is an eclectic gathering of songs that range from the lilting pop sounds of "I'll Carry On" and the rock of "Big And Strong" all the way to the Irish folk instrumental "78 Eatonwood Place" and the soaring, epical "The Color Green." Lyrically, Mullins also travels somewhat off the

beaten path and delivers a two-sided look at what makes "us". Side One of A Liturgy, a Legacy, and a Ragamuffin band explores the liturgy of life as a Christian-that foundation of truth that, as Rich defines it, "says these things will be more important to me than my own personal agenda, because we're part of one another and the faith that makes us one is more important than our own personal take on faith." Through liturgy we find the foundation "that doesn't change" and through his music Mullins remembers two thousand years of Christian tradition as the framework to modern-day faith. Side Two of the album, The Legacy, looks to Mullins' own traditions and heritage.

The self-described "good mid-western boy" can trace his family's history back to the heart of Europe, scattered across France, Germany and Ireland in the dreams of immigrants who found a new home in the promise of America. "The significant thing to me about legacy," he says, "is that there is certainly either some terrible desperation or some terrific courage on the part of those before me - people who made choices in the course of their lives which, had they made any other choice of where they lived or who they married, I would not have even happened. The particular combination of genes that make me would have been impossible. So I am the result of their courage. I am the result of their desperation." Mullins' backward glance not only lent itself to producing a gamut of songs championing family, country, faith and history, it also brought amazing new revelations into his repertoire of thought.

"A wonderful thing to do," he continues, "after you've looked at your own family and realized where you come from, is to look at the line that Christ came from. And even if you just start with David, there was a great deal of adultery and murder. And people are just people. Looking at the legacy that we've been handed down basically means coming to terms with our humanity. That doesn't mean that we evolve into better human beings-it means we become keenly aware that the decisions we make today are going to affect our children and future generations. Everybody is human and everybody cheats and everybody gets hurt. I think our heritage is given to us to humble us, not to puff us up."

In his less-than-a-decade of work as a solo artist within the realm of Christian music, Mullins has created a legacy that determines to live on in the guise of seven albums that have earned numerous accolades (Rich Mullins, Pictures in the Sky, Winds of Heaven, Stuff of Earth, Never Picture Perfect, World As Best As I Remember It, Volumes 1 & 2, and A Liturgy, a

Legacy, and a Ragamuffin Band), including eight number one radio hits and ten Dove Award nominations. In addition, his song-writing talents have produced what was voted one of the top three most popular songs of the decade, "Awesome God," as well as Amy Grant's hits, "Sing Your Praise To the Lord," "Doubly Good" and "Love Of Another Kind." Between a 65-city tour in 1989, an 80-city tour in '90, two massive tours in support of both volumes of World As Best As I Remember It, and his 1994 A Liturgy, a Legacy, and a Ragamuffin Band tour, Mullins has performed for nearly half a million fans.

The album has already generated the #1 radio hit, "Hold Me Jesus" (which also received 1994 Dove Award nominations for "Song Of The Year" and "Contemporary Recorded Song Of The Year") and the #3 radio hit, "Here In America." It also led to the creation of a long-form video project, Pursuit of a Legacy, which includes videos of both of these songs as well as "Creed" and "The Color Green." Produced by Steve Taylor and directed by Taylor and Ben Pearson, the video captures Reunion's traveling ragamuffin as he reflects on the legacy passed down to him as well as the legacy he'd like to leave.

But as far as legacies go, Mullins these days is more content to reflect on the richness of his family's history than on the honors his musical career has bestowed. He is currently a college student studying music ethnicology and looks forward to sharing his musical gifts as a teacher-working with Native American children. It's easy to see that what his father taught him is still the mainstay of his heart today. "The best thing I ever learned from my dad is that love is a very practical thing," says Rich. "You don't love somebody by telling them that you love them. You don't love somebody by making out with them. You love somebody by wanting what's best for them and doing something about it."

They say you can never go home again, and that's probably true, but Rich Mullins has found a way to bring past and present together through music and words that are as timeless as they are timely. And when a liturgy meets a legacy, for this artist, poet, sinner and saint, the result is a rich scrapbook of history and harmony, music and memory, laughter, love and life.

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Pursuit of a Legacy Review

April Hefner

To get inside the brain of a man who thoughtfully ponders the mysteries of God, and does so with logic and wonder, has its privileges and dangers as it serves to both enlighten and challenge. Precious few artists can claim to be such effective poets, though Rich Mullins certainly can be regarded as a leader on that list. In this 30-minute video, the viewer has the opportunity to not only view four single-song videos from Rich's newest album, A Liturgy, A Legacy and a Ragamuffin Band, but also can simply dwell upon the words of this talented lyricist and philosopher. There is so much quotable material in this video that your pen will run dry and your journal will be full of new ideas on the magnitude of God's unfathomable love and grace. (Wait 'til you hear his ideas about "I'd rather be on the verge of falling...").

Rich has a gift of bringing the intangible to life to see and to touch, and does so with great success on these videos where his songs find homes in scenery, faces and frame after frame of legacies. Produced by Ben Pearson and Steve Taylor, Pursuit... was filmed on location in Colombia, New York City, the Flint Hills of Kansas, the home of Rich's friends, and in Rich's own attic flat in Wichita, Kansas. Pearson and Taylor are gaining quite a reputation for capturing the essence of a song with video footage that is edgy and unique, stark and colorful, moving and symbolic. Basically, it's just really cool!

The video, which includes clips for "Here in America," "The Color Green," "Creed," and "Hold Me Jesus," releases this month and retails for \$9.98. It's sure to become a favorite for Mullins fans, but will more likely give all Christian music listeners a thing or two to ponder about life and faith. Stay tuned after the credits are over to hear about the work of Compassion International and see a bonus clip for the song "Peace."

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A Liturgy, a Legacy, and a Ragamuffin Band Review

Chris Well

Much like the Big God who visited us as a tiny baby, Rich Mullins isn't someone you should take one glance at and decide you've seen it all.

Take for instance, his latest, A Liturgy, A Legacy and a Ragamuffin Band. The band Mullins has assembled is alone worth a look: Rick Elias, Jimmy Abegg, Danny O'Lannerty, Chris McHugh, Lee Lundgren, Eric Darken, Billy Crockett, and long-time Mullins' collaborator Beaker. Here's a group of guys who, to varying degrees, really deserve larger recognition than they sometimes get on other projects. That Mullins saw their talents and recruited them for his Ragamuffin Band is an immense artistic achievement in and of itself.

The opening words of the album - Elias announcing to the band that he may not be entirely ready - certainly sets the stage for something a little different than "Christian music as usual."

For starters, the album title isn't some cute little designation so you can go out and buy the record - the structure of the album follows the two main ideas through. Roughly, Mullins is using the term "liturgy" to mean the technical and intellectual elements of our worship, the high church stuff, and "legacy" as the more emotional elements, passed to us through tradition and family. Further, the band is termed "ragamuffin" to refer to Brennan Manning's The Ragamuffin Gospel, showing us all as sinners in need of grace. This idea is then woven into the whole project, connecting the other two elements together.

Musically, it's an appealing package to those who realize that "adult contemporary" doesn't have to mean Sandi Patti or even Michael Bolton; the mix of hammer dulcimer and Irish pop would sound nice in any mix that

included, say, Enya or, in Christian music, Iona or Jan Krist. It's literate and compelling music.

But totally and completely worth the whole price of admission, is the rockin' cover of Mark Heard's Ideola track, "How to Grow Up Big and Strong." Thematically following the delicate Christmas song "You Gotta Get Up," which Mullins writes from a child's perspective, the band then lays hard into the downside of losing childlike faith - and, in so doing, losing everything.

Rich Mullins seems at times to be an artist who is always dissatisfied, always itchy to find new and different ways to explore his faith through art. His discoveries are sometimes disturbing, sometimes simple, sometimes shocking - but always worth chewing on. And while they aren't as ragged and world-weart as say, those of Rick Elias - there are moments of Mullins' Ragamuffin Band that also make me say, "hey, I've felt that, too." Which means that a rarity of rarities has happened - an album of unequivocally obvious church music has made me stop and rethink my faith. And I'm the better for it.

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The World As Best As I Remember It, Volume 2 Review

Thom Granger

*Hello old friends
There's really nothing new to say
But the old old story bears repeating
And the plain old truth grows dearer every day...*

So begins Volume 2 of Rich Mullins' 'rememberances', to the delicate sounds of Billy Crockett's acoustic guitar. It's an approach that resonates well with Mullins' audience, who've taken his songs to heart and doubtless come to feel more like friends than fans. Those words are also key to understanding the artist himself, one who unashamedly retells those 'old old stories' from the Bible in ways that are fresh, artful, and relevant to a contemporary expression of faith.

The World..., Volume 2 restates the project's unifying theme, the simple worship chorus "Step by Step", reworked this time as "Sometimes by Step", with new lyrics forming verses around the now-familiar chorus. It's a quantum leap from the simplicity of the Volume 1 version, where it was sung at first by a child, then by a child-like Mullins. Now the writer is older, presumably wiser, but with seemingly more questions than answers; yet the trusting innocence of the chorus becomes a spiritual compass for this artist's complex journey through the Kingdom of God.

And so it goes throughout most of Volume 2, as Mullins asks tough questions, in songs like "Waiting" and "Growing Young" and returns to Scripture and his personal Ebenezers for reassurance and renewal of his faith ("Everyman," "The Just Shall Live," and, voted least likely to win a Dove Award for song title of the year, "The Maker of Noses").

At times Mullins' love for God (as expressed in his songs) has failed to express love for his fellow man, an all-too-common problem in devotional music, making it so heavenly minded, it's no earthly good, so to speak. Here however, the artist writes with great affection, not only for the biblical characters he calls up ("Everyman"), but also for his co-writer, co-worker, and co-monk-in-disguise Beaker, in "What Susan Said".

Musically, Mullins draws from a slightly more limited palette than on previous releases, as melody lines start to sound a little too similar at times, and some of them just not catchy enough to stick with you the way they should, but producer Reed Arvin's superb arrangements and Mullins' own vocal work (which has never been better) compensates well for most of ...Volume 2.

One of contemporary Christian music's best writers and thinkers Rich Mullins wraps up his two volume song cycle with the Fanny Crosby hymn, "All the Way My Savior Leads Me" and a reprise of "Step by Step", reminding us of the "plain old truth" that it is us who still seek, he who graciously leads, and we who must follow.

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The World As Best As I Remember It, Volume 1 Review

Thom Granger

*Oh God you are my God
And I will ever praise you
I will seek you in the morning
And learn to walk in your ways
And step by step you'll lead me
And I will follow you all of my days.*

Those simple words, sung with sincerity (by a child no less), serve to both open and close The World As Best As I Can Remember It, Volume 1, Rich Mullins' latest statements of art and faith, masquerading as Christian pop music.

This song ("Step by Step"), written by Mullins' aide-de-camp known simply as Beaker, is an unabashedly understated way to begin an album of sophisticated songs that finds its center in the scriptures, and its power in Mullins' poetic expressions of their relevance to his own life.

In "Boy Like Me/Man Like You" Mullins makes the relatively easy analogy of his own childhood memories to Jesus' experience ("You was a boy like I was once, but was you a boy like me?/I grew up in Indiana, you grew up in Galilee/And if I ever really do grow up, Lord I want to grow up just like you"). Things get much more complex however in "Jacob and 2 Women", where his retelling of the Genesis account of Jacob and Rachel begins with the tongue-in-cheek comment that Leah was "just there for dramatic effect," and concludes that his portrait of a lonely Rachel with this enigmatic verse: "And her sky is just a hangman's noose/Cause he stole the moon and must be made to pay for it/And her friends say, 'my that's tragic'/She says, 'especially for the moon'/This is the world as best as I can

remember it."

In between such extremes are a batch of songs in which both classic bible stories are amplified to connect to modern reality ("Where You Are," "Who God Is Gonna Use"); and the dilemmas of the Christian life - effecting issues both large and social ("The Howling"), and those most intimate and personal ("The River") are intelligently addressed.

All of these comments pertain to Mullins lyrics of course, and though their quality is substantial enough to stand alone as poetry, it is the music on this album that elevates it to the status of a great recording. From the bagpipes that begin "Step by Step" to the hammer dulcimer that praises the God who formed the prairies in "Calling Out Your Name," Mullins and producer Reed Arvin have crafted a series of arrangements for these compositions that are remarkably "commercial" in the quality and accessibility of the songwriting.

The only complaint here is a simple one - why so short? Mullins and Arvin recorded an "album and a half's worth" of material, and with current CD technology allowing for up to 80 minutes on a single disc, wouldn't it have been ambitious and true to the spirit of these recording sessions to have put out all the finished tunes out now? Nevertheless, even at 35 minutes or so, The World As Best As I Remember It, Volume 1 is a most satisfying album, from one of contemporary Christian music's most remarkable composers.

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Never Picture Perfect Review

Devlin Donaldson

The hype says Rich Mullins is a poet for the common man. While that does in fact turn out to be true, I believe he is the poet for the uncommon man as well. He reaches deep within himself and exposes feeling everyone can relate to. Last year's Winds of Heaven, Stuff of Earth was a strong album. Never Picture Perfect is an even better one. Here is the voice of a man who has found himself, found his God, and found a big world in need of mercy.

Mullins is keenly and personally aware of the brokenness in our world ("I Will Sing," "While the Nations Rage," "Bound to Come Some Trouble") but is able to praise God for His goodness ("Hope to Carry On," "Alrightokuhahmen," "The Love of God") and sees God's mercy applied in the everyday world more clearly than in spectacular "sign" miracles ("First Family").

Sometimes Mullins' music sounds a bit derivative to me, but that's easy to forgive because he brings back all the feelings I had when I first found Christian music, the excitement of music that articulated my faith and it's working out in my life. Never Picture Perfect is a great album. It's what Christian music is supposed to be all about.

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Winds of Heaven, Stuff of Earth Review

Jon Woodhams

Perhaps best described as a "musical world tour," Mullins' third release, Winds of Heaven, Stuff of Earth makes it clear that the songwriter/singer has seen, as he sings, "The Other Side of the World", and found God there, too. In fact, the these here seems to be that of finding God in all of creation, as though Psalms 19 had been paraphrased and set to a pop oratorio.

Standing in a child-like awe of his creator and armed with an uncanny gift of communication, Mullins ushers the listener into a worship experience, succeeding where so-called "praise" albums fall.

This time around Mullins and producer Reed Arvin have tapped into the songwriter's travels in the Far East to give the album an unmistakable international flair. Both the material and the sparkling, acoustic-flavored arrangements contribute to the global textures as does the pulsating percussion of the Miami Sound Machine's Rafael Padilla.

"Awesome God" is a praise in the vein of "Great is the Lord" and is sure to find its way into future hymnals. Other highlights include "Such A Thing As Glory," "Ready For The Storm," (remiscent of the group America) and the aforementioned "Other Side of the World."

Rich Mullins may never join the likes of Russ Taff or Matthew Ward in the "Vocal Hall of Fame," but he is an honest and remarkably effective communicator and his song writing is some of the best in the business. Winds of Heaven, Stuff of Earth accentuates these strengths and Mullins' listeners will surely find themselves singing - and worshipping - along with him.

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Pictures in the Sky Review

Bruce A. Brown

Most rookie artists would be proud to have a sophomore release as good as Pictures in the Sky. But most new artists in the past few years didn't have a debut as outstanding as Rich Mullins. Everything about that record, from the self-deprecating cover (which pictured the artist sporting a "Rich Mullins" T-shirt with the top of his head missing!) to the superior songwriting, set Mullins apart from the crowd. Almost everything about Mullins' follow-up, however, shows Mullins trying to fit into that mold that he so effortlessly broke out of on his first LP.

Specifically, Mullins is haunted by Elvis Costello disease, a songwriter's malady which finds a series of cleverly turned phrases not quite adding up to a whole song. Mullins seems to have been influenced a great deal by Michael W. Smith in the past year, but Pictures in the Sky displays none of Smith's keyboard prowess or arranging abilities. Possessing only an average voice, Mullins first released an album whose strength was the economy of lyric and arrangement coupled with knowledge of how far not to push his voice. The new record carries that challenge no farther vocally and displays little of Mullins' charm and wit. In fact, the lone outstanding track on the first side is "Faith Without Works" ("Screen Door"), a Bobby McFerrin/Manhattan Transfer vocal novelty that could almost be labeled a throwaway.

Mullins redeems the album on side two with three very good songs and two others that are quite strong. "Steal at Any Price" finds him looking into people's lives through Christ's eyes and experiencing their pain as Jesus would. The title track features a nice piano bridge a la Bruce Hornsby while "Could Be a Celebration" lays down a sinewy Latin groove.

The R&B workout of "It Don't Do" is a clever reminder not to put the cart

before the horse, and "What Trouble Are Giants" is a hilarious paraphrase of the David and Goliath story.

It's hard to imagine that the writer of such classic songs as "Sing Your Praise to the Lord" and "Love of Another Kind" couldn't come up with stronger material for his second album. Perhaps the excellence of Mullins' first album made me expect that much better a follow-up. But, I'll be content with the half-dozen quality tracks here and hope that Rich hits his stride next time around.

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Rich Mullins Review

Bruce A. Brown

Rich Mullins, known previously only as scribe to the likes of Amy Grant, Debby Boone, and Benny Hester, has released a doozy of a debut. Titled Rich Mullins, presumably so you won't forget who he is, this LP is proof that terrific writers often keep a few good tunes in their own hip pockets.

Happily, Rich has the pipes to go with his accomplished writing skills. Although not a dazzling singer, Mullins seems to know just how far he can reach without overstepping his range. Producer Reed Arvin provides Mullins with a pop/rock backdrop that enhances his energetic style.

The album's lyrical themes are built mostly around Mullins' paraphrase of the apostle Paul - "You should be glad you're alive, and look forward to being dead." Pointing up that creed is the dance/pop delight "Live Right" that features a cameo from Amy Grant. Mullins' music is nothing if not motivational and inspirational. "Nothing But A Miracle" says quite matter-of-factly, "I believe you can do anything if you can love." "Both Feet On The Ground" takes a more down-to-earth approach to that same subject as Rich muses, "I'm not head over heels, and I'm not on cloud nine. And I don't think love is blind." "These Days" laments the state of the world without sounding maudlin, and "Prisoner", a great tune built on a Police-type riff, emphatically states, "I'd rather be a prisoner of your love than the champion of my doubt."

By far, my favorite track on Rich Mullins is the album's closer, "Save Me." Over a circular synthesizer setting, Mullins implores the Lord to save him from, among other things, "any value I can put a price tag on" and "trendy religion that makes cheap cliches out of timeless truths." Armed with an arsenal of spectacular songs and holding down the opening spot on Amy Grant's current tour, Rich Mullins should establish himself as a major

presence in contemporary Christian music before too long.

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[RichMailList 181]: Memorial - Cincinnati Bible College

↑ kidbrothers.net/rmml/rmml181.html

Date: 21 October 1997

To: RichMailList

Subject: [RichMailList 181]: Memorial - Cincinnati Bible College

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Date: Tue, 21 Oct 1997 23:09:53

Subject: CBC Memorial, 10/21/97

From: [Thomas K Laughlin](#)

Presidents Hall, Cincinnati Bible College

Welcome & prayer : Shawn McMullen of CBC

Jeff Sack, who had toured with Rich at one time, played piano and sang

'Step by Step', "My Jesus, I love thee" and "Tis so sweet to trust in

Jesus". Jeff said Rich taught him to love C.S. Lewis & Cincinnati.

Jeff sang a song he wrote in the last month. It was really nice.

"When I cross that river thats the last time I'll cry..."

A video of still photos of the early years of Zion was then shown, with

pictures of Concerts at Fountain Square in Cincinnati, and the 1980 Sonshine festival in Butler County Fair grounds, and other places

Jamie Carmichael, Rich's roommate at CBC, then spoke about the years

from 1974 on when they were together at CBC. He recalled times

when Rich
would live in inner city areas (lower price hill), and do concerts
on the
street.

Terry Fisher who had been with the Jesus House then spoke. It was
November, 1974 when Rich did his first coffeehouse at the Jesus
House in
Mt. Healthy, Ohio. Rich did 12 "coffeehouses" at the Jesus House
solo,
and then 11 times with Zion. Every December, Zion would do a
Christmas
concert at the Jesus House. Terry recalled that Rich had great
talent,
but it was the Lord flowing through Rich, and Rich yielding to the
Lord,
that brought so much fruit. Rich had total dependence on the Lord.
And
Terry recalled some of Rich's mild (and not so mild)
eccentricities.
He read from Psalm 118, and remarked that we all marveled at what
all
God did with our friend Rich.

A letter from Mark Hard was read. Mark and Rich were close during
the
Bible School days.

Then Jenny Wesner, Beth Snell Lutz, and Tom Weimer (all of Zion)
sang
"If I Stand". Jenny recalled how Rich often used to go ahead of
the
group to concerts early, to set-up. The others had jobs, and would
often
be just on time. But Rich would go ahead early. When she heard of
his
death, she thought He's gone ahead of us again. And we who remain
now
we are the ones who have to stand!

Phil Heimlich, Cincinnati City Councilman, read a proclamation declaring
10/21/97 "Richard Wayne Mullins day" in Cincinnati.

Professor Ron Henderson then spoke. He told how Rich was in his freshman English class, and that Rich's writings were "original" like
nothing he has ever seen before or since in any of his students. He remarked how Rich was politically incorrect at CBC before the phrase had
even been coined. Rich would not conform to the established order.

Rich was part of his "student family" (a group of 15 students assigned
to each professor) and Rich never missed a meeting. They had great discussions. And Rich loved to lead song, and just entertain with music.

Rich later came back and guest lectured in his English class. He recalled the first public performance of "Sing your praise to the
Lord" and remembered thinking that it was better than any music he was
hearing on the radio that day. It was no ordinary music, but something
special. He said Rich hated cliches, so he had to create a new one to
describe Rich "Rich shuffled to the beat of a different dulcimer".

They then showed excerpts of "Pursuit of a Legacy" and also "Not afraid
of the dark" which was read by Kathy Sprinkle (but I believe written by
Rich) . It was awesome writing!

Beth Snell Lutz then sang "The 23rd Psalm", a song Rich had written.
She met Rich 22 years ago on her first day at CBC. Everyone was
in 3
piece suits, until she saw this guy with long hair, jeans with
holes, and

bare feet. She remembered thinking Thank God there is a human-person here. She first heard him sing outside playing the piano on the hillside at CBC overlooking Cincinnati. She heard words from Rich that helped her for the first time understand what was in her heart. (I think many can attest to the same when hearing Rich's music). She got to listen to Rich playing in the music rooms, up until the day CBC told Rich he couldn't play anymore because it wasn't music he was banging out on the piano. Rich didn't quite fit the mold of the conforming CBC student. She said Rich was confused about life, but yielded himself to allow God to use him.

Dave Mullins (Rich's brother) then spoke. Rich was honest and open, truthful about himself, and that drew people to him. What many saw in him was a sinner struggling to sin less. He had uncommon gifts. Was he a saint? Was he a sinner struggling to sin less? He was all of these things. And he called to us to "come and join me on the way".

You Be Gods where you are, and He will use you. Be faithful in the small things, use your gifts for God. That is what Rich did. And that is why he went so far. Rich wasn't great because of his gifts, or who he was. He was great because of *whose* he was! (Rich yielded himself to God much, so God could flow through him).

Then Sam Howard spoke (former member of Zion). He told how he saw

Rich

in concert, and told him after that he'd like to get to know him more.

The next day, Rich showed up at his dorm room. He played some of his

songs, for Rich. They traded back and forth. Finally he just listened

to Rich's songs. Rich told the whole truth, good and bad, in his songs.

Oh, he mentioned that Rich had an opinion on everything, and if he didn't, he'd make one up.

It was mentioned that Rich said if he were to die, he would want to say

two things: "Forgive me" and "Thank You". He was a gifted, humble man,

who loved everyone he met.

The video 'Elijah' was played. Jeff Sack led in the singing of "It is

well with my soul", And then David Gubbs, president of CBC gave a closing benediction.

It was nice. There were around 200 people in attendance. Many were old

friends from the Zion and Jesus House and CBC days. A real family of

rebellious Christian hippies had rallied around Rich and Zion and the

Jesus House in the late 70's early 80's. It was a wonderful time, with

many strong lasting relationships, and everyone had been thrilled as

Rich's wonderful music went national and international. They all saw the

talent, inspiration, and gift in this wonderful humble radical friend.

All mourn the loss, but are comforted in knowing that (as one of the

speakers said) "the volume is turned up a little bit louder now in

heaven!"

I hope you get reviews of the memorial from others to fill in the gaps I missed, but here are the thoughts I can remember from the service that ended less than 2 hours ago.

Tom

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[RichMailList 178]: Memorial - Window Rock, AZ

↑ kidbrothers.net/rmml/rmml178.html

Date: 16 October 1997

To: RichMailList

Subject: [RichMailList 178]: Memorial - Window Rock, AZ

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[Return to Light 99 Online](#)

Date: Tue, 14 Oct 1997 15:38:42 (MDT)

From: [Julie Maples](#)

Subject: Window Rock memorial

My first impression on entering the Education Center in Window Rock

was there were as many children there as adults -- running or talking

or handing out programs. My second thought was that the room was permeated with a spirit of joy, or at least of peace, that I hadn't

expected to find. It may have been that the people who knew and loved

Rich had spent or expressed much of their grief by this point; it may

have been the ability of a people already more attuned to peace.

Whatever the case, I saw more smiles than tears, and an atmosphere more of fellowship than of grieving. I felt somewhat like an uninvited guest, so I mostly stayed in the background and watched rather than try to talk to people. But by the end of the evening, their focus on the good they remembered had done much to temper my own

sadness with joy.

The time began with a video montage, which I would assume was

shown at

the other memorials, and then a bilingual prayer thanking God for His

gift of life to us all. From this point, things took on much the form

of an evening Rich would have spent with any group of people: his music filled the room, interspersed with his profound insights

(via

tape and video) on the meaning of life, entertaining stories, and hymns sung by the audience. A chorus of children sang "Awesome God"

and "Sometimes By Step", in accompaniment to the original recordings,

and a women's choir sang two older hymns in Navajo. Several members

of the Bonito and Window Rock communities got up to speak words of fond memory and of exhortation to continue the ideals Rich believed

in. I took notes as best I could, and will include some of the statements I heard -- probably not in order or verbatim, but hopefully

preserved in the spirit in which they were spoken.

A teacher from one of the Christian schools in the area asked us to

think on the idea that sound has a spectrum just as light does, with

levels at both ends which are beyond our comprehension. Right now, he

said, Rich is performing in Heaven, with a far greater capacity for

sound and instrumentation than he ever had on this earth, and he's probably composing a new song for God every day, if not every second...and we hear so little down here, he said, such a small range

of sound, but if we listen maybe we can hear just a little of that beautiful music ("a music higher than the songs that I can sing", I thought...)

A student said, "He sang what he felt about God so we could

understand

what God was saying to us in our own hearts."

Another local resident told of how Rich showed his love for the kids

in little ways, like helping them to collect foreign coins from the

different countries he travelled to, and sending them souvenirs from

all his trips.

Several people described, bringing smiles all around, Rich's

often-frustrated attempts to build a hogan, and the advice and help

they offered him in participating in this tradition.

A friend recounted how Rich would tell people that the window rock reminded him of the hole that exists in all our hearts, and how we have to fill it with God to make it beautiful...she concluded, "In his

absence, let us do the same with the hole in our hearts."

As a native New Mexican, I rejoiced at the chance to finally hear a

recording of "If You're Ever In New Mexico", which was sung by Mitch

and accompanied by slides of Rich, band mates and children involved in

local activities. What a beautiful song.

Next, Gay Quisenberry and Alyssa Loukota took the stage together, both

giving eloquent testimonies of Rich's love for God and God's love for

all of us. Gay Quisenberry said that while everybody thought he came

out here to teach, he really came to learn -- "about suffering from a

people who had suffered much; about forgiveness from a people who

had
many people to forgive". She also said that he came "to be a
kid",
because he knew that kids are the ones we have to be like to get
into the kingdom of Heaven. In reference to John 12:24, read
earlier
by Eric Hauck, Alyssa Loukota said, "I believe Rich came here so
he
could be that seed that died."

Finally, they displayed a gorgeous work of Southwestern art, in
the
form of a video to "I See You". Following this, we all sang
"Sometimes by Step", "Holy Holy Holy", and ended, on a fitting
note,
with the Doxology.

What I personally felt like, by the time the whole evening was
over,
was a (priveleged) guest sitting in the corner at Rich Mullins'
family
reunion. Not only were there members of his own family present,
but I
saw all around me a community that was a family, and that for a
time
had made Rich one of their own. The stories and reminiscences I
heard
were the kind only family and neighbors tell: beating him at
cards,
singing with him in church, answering the door late at night to
find
him asking if he and Mitch could play for them the song they had
just
finished writing. During the meal that followed the service, a
microphone was set up so that anyone else who wanted to share
their
personal memories of Rich could do so. Those who came forward
added
stories like that of the man who asked Rich to help set up chairs
for

a local concert he had given (which of course Rich willingly did),
and
not realizing who he was until he saw him up on the stage. Or of
the
time they all put their heads together to try and throw him a
birthday
party, but Rich gave the best gift of the evening when he and
Mitch
played "If You're Ever In New Mexico", which they had just
completed.

At the same time, my impression from this evening was much the
same as the one I've found in the words of the people everywhere
who
loved Rich Mullins: a truly one-of-a-kind man walked this earth
for a
while and then had to leave it, but he left behind an
irrepressible
call to love God and one another, a call that could still be heard
echoing off the red rocks of the Navajo land, just as its echoes
continue to be heard all around the world. I saw the hands of
love
extended and meeting -- connecting the world without, that had
loved
Rich and what he stood for, with this community that had seen from
within how he put what he stood for into such real and genuine and
everyday terms. I saw and heard, in the repeated declarations of
love
shared and exchanged among all these people, the dream becoming
reality -- what I think was Rich's dream, what I know is God's,
and
what I hope continues to be all of ours: Glory to God, and on
earth,
peace among men.

If you're interested, here was a bit of information I hadn't seen
anywhere yet (this came from the back of the program):

Christ For Native Youth has established a Scholarship Fund in honor of Rich Mullins which will benefit qualified students in Native America, pursuing full time Christian service.

Contact: _Christ For Native Youth_
P.O. Box 3660
Window Rock, AZ 86515
(505) 371-5354

It was a truly inspiring evening.
Julie

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[RichMailList 171]: Memorial - Peoria, IL

↑ kidbrothers.net/rmml/rmml171.html

Date: 29 September 1997

To: RichMailList

Subject: [RichMailList 171]: Memorial - Peoria, IL

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[Return to Light 99 Online](#)

Date: Sun, 28 Sep 1997 12:59:18

From: [Jennifer Hall](#)

Subject: Peoria, IL Memorial service --review

September 27, 1997, The First Assembly of God Church in Peoria, IL held

a memorial service for Rich Mullins. It was held with the hope of being

able to minister to the McVicker Family who remains in Peoria, as well

the many others in the area who had been affected by Rich's life and

music.

Doors opened at 5:30, giving people a chance to come early and write in

a memorial book that will be sent to Rich's family, as well as a book of

encouragement for Mitch and his family. There was also opportunity to

donate money to the McVicker family to be of help during their stay in

Peoria for expenses such as gas, food, etc. (Their housing and hospital

expenses have already been addressed). The lobby was filled with

articles and pictures--including some recent photos of Mitch and Rich and some friends from the band during Mitch's recording in Chicago. Rich's video "Pursuit of a Legacy" was playing as well as many of his other songs in the background.

The service opened with an invocation by Pastor Stewart, and we were led into "Awesome God" by musician Chris Summer. Then Jeff Mayfield from Lincoln Christian College came to give a short tribute to Rich, "The man God used for His glory". He had several opportunities to work with Rich at the college, telling how this man that he had grown to love also could frustrate him like no other. He told how on one occasion, when Rich was playing for them during a college recruiting week, that he and Rich had just spoken back stage about how the main goal was to get kids to attend a Christian college. Rich went out on stage, and during the concert he stopped and said, "You know, you don't have to go to a Bible college to please God." Jeff said he wanted to strangle him. He also talked about how when the concerts were over, all Rich and Beaker wanted to do was to hang out and eat junk food and play basketball all night.

Next they played Rich's song "One Thing", followed by a message by youth minister Eli Beltram, who asked us the question, "Is God Your One Thing?" We then heard "Home" by Rich, followed by a prayer for Mitch

and family. They shared that Mitch had been taken off the respirator that day, and his condition was steadily improving. Tracey Moushon shared about her experience in meeting Rich and Mitch this past May during a concert here in Peoria. She said that during the intermission, while she was working at their sales table, dozens of people were asking who Mitch was, so after the intermission she caught Mitch backstage to find out. She said, "Mitch, we have a problem. there are all these people asking who you are and how to find out more about you and I don't know what to tell them." He thought for a minute, then said. "I know, as of right now, we'll start a mailing list." He then took the legal pad that Tracy was holding, and numbered it from 1 to 10 and handed it back to her. "There we go." She just laughed and handed it back to him. "Mitch -- there are MORE than ten!!!" It appears that our brother Mitch shares some of Rich's humility.

Then Jill Fisher from the local radio station spoke about God's perfect timing, and how God had used Rich to minister to her during her college days through one of his concerts. We then heard some clips from the local tribute which aired on WCIC, which included recordings phoned in from fans who spoke of the impact Rich had left on their lives, or perhaps a favorite Rich memory. the service then concluded with congregational singing -- "Sing Your Praise to the Lord", "Step by

Step", "If I Stand", "Hold Me Jesus", and, following in the tradition of Rich's concerts, closed with "I See You".

I was surprised to see only about 200 in attendance, but then again, you're talking to the fan who camped out over night once for his concert tickets because I was sure that it would sell out in hours. I never could figure it out. I always have said to my friends who laughed at my obsession with Rich's music, "If you can't comprehend the depth of his artistry, you shouldn't even be allowed to listen to him." It's like some people just never "got" it. I am just thankful that I was one of many whose lives were made Richer...

I sure do miss him...

Jennifer Hall
jshurts@ocslink.com

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Memories Of Rich

↑ kidbrothers.net/rmml/rmml184.html

Date: 1 November 1997

To: RichMailList

Subject: [RichMailList 184]: Memorial - Wichita, KS

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Henry Levitt Arena

Wichita State University, Wichita, KS

Saturday 7:00pm, September 27th, 1997

review by [Danl Blackwood](#)

(last updated 01/31/2014)

[Audio Recording available here in the YouTube Ragamuffin Archive](#)

(there was a loud buzz throughout the original Light 99 broadcast of this event, and in the recording later posted on Light 99's web page;

thankfully the YouTube Ragamuffin Archive was successful in greatly reducing the noise.)

This is a very long review, but it is written with those in mind who never got a chance to go to any of the organized memorials, and for those who are still struggling with Rich's death. May the God of Peace comfort you, and may the Lord Jesus Christ lead you to a more faithful place in your life for having known Rich's ministry and music, listened to and learned through his teachings (whether in person or just through his recordings), and rejoice that he now has joined our loving Savior in heaven.

The service was held at **Henry Levitt Arena** (renamed [Charles Koch Arena](#) after it's renovation in 2002/2003) at **Wichita State University**. Wichitans call it the "Roundhouse." Before the 7:00pm start, we listened to the conclusion of **Light 99's** three hour special broadcast program that was fed in over the house speakers. We all listened as, without the benefit of rehearsal, **Craig West** ([now on the K-LOVE morning crew](#)) read live on-air a piece that Rich wrote back in January 1992 as part of the promotion for "The World As Best As I Remember It". In it, Rich imagines "old Moses sitting on a mountain - sitting with God - looking across the Jordan into the Promised Land." He also describes

God taking "Moses' thin-worn, thread-bare little body into His hands" and "folds Moses' pale lifeless arms across His chest for burial." When he then wonders "who will bury me," Craig began to struggle with the emotion that surely every person with ears to hear had been and continued to struggle with in those days (and even weeks) after the accident. Somehow he mustered the strength to finish the reading, and was most likely lifted by "the power of His presence."

The stage was on the floor of the arena that held approximately 10,500, and the crowd filled half of the arena facing it, including a few hundred reserved seats on the floor. The attendance was estimated at about 5,000, and though I really expected a full house, I found after visiting with many in the previous days that some didn't come because they thought "it would just be too sad." Those absent for that reason included my wife and daughters, though they listened to most of the memorial on Light 99 which broadcast the memorial live on the radio, as well as live on the Internet. The instruments on stage looked familiar, but there was one noticeably missing - the hammer dulcimer. We sat waiting for the beginning of the program (my guests were my friend **Kerry Livgren**, who drove down from Topeka, with his daughter **Katy**, his pastor, and his pastor's wife), read our programs, and glanced around a bit for familiar faces. As well as those we would see later in the program, I saw **Beaker** (David Strasser) and his wife Julie and the kids, **Billy Crockett** (Ragamuffin and solo artist), **Gay Quisenberry** (Rich's former manager), **Jordan** and **Cobra Joe (This Train)**, and others. Unlike other concerts though, somehow I just didn't seem that motivated to "see who was there." It wasn't until days later that I found out that Rich's mom and some of the family had indeed made it to Wichita for this memorial. On the cover of the program, entitled "Memories of Rich", they had a picture of a very young Rich Mullins leaning up against a building in his trademark "holey jeans", and sporting a very young, big grin. The title and the picture was accompanied by the dates 1956-1997 (Oops - of course it should have read 1955-1997, one of very few indications that this massive event was organized in less than a week!).

The lights went down and the **Central Christian** praise band started things off by praising the God who made Rich who he was, and had now called him home. They led us in some of Rich's favorite hymns.

*This World Is Not My Home
'Tis So Sweet To Trust In Jesus
Come Thou Font Of Every Blessing
It Is Well With My Soul
Sing Your Praise To The Lord
Awesome God*

The praise band members were **Steve Brummer** (keyboards, song leader), **Lee Lundgren** (guitar), **Nicki Lundgren** (BGVs), **Robbin Viser** (bass), **Scott Brummer** (guitar), **Kyle Stevens** (drums), **Sherri Howard McCready** (BGVs), and **Crystal Evans** (BGVs). Then we were welcomed by **Sam Howard**, a close personal friend of Rich, and son of **Maurice Howard**, the pastor whose friendship and mentoring was the reason Rich moved to Wichita. "Tonight, we want to do two things." said Sam, "We want to rejoice in the hope that we have in Jesus, and we want to remember the joys, sorrows, and life we shared with our friend." Sam described Rich as someone who traveled the world, and everywhere he went, he left a piece of himself - sometimes a whole suitcase. That brought the first of many rounds of laughter that we would enjoy, to which Sam replied, "OK, some of you *did* know him. That's good." Sam hoped that the evening would be more one of "laughter mixed with tears, or else it's gonna be hard for a lot of us to get through this." He mentioned that the program had kinda taken on a life of it's own, and that we should ignore the program. The program was pretty close, but there were some surprises, which was "exactly as Rich would have loved". I understand such was the case with the Nashville memorial program as well.

Cheryl Hurley, of **Broomtree Productions**, then welcomed everyone to Wichita, and thanked all those who helped her organize the memorial, including [Wichita State University](#), **Light 99 FM**, [Friends University](#), and [Central Christian Church](#). Cheryl then shared a memory of Rich by describing the times that Rich would come home from the studio to the apartment he and Beaker lived in, and invite the community of friends over to hear new songs. It seems that many of the close friends (Rich, Beaker, Sprinkle, Cheryl, Doris Howard, and others) all lived in close proximity not only to each other, but to **St Joseph's Hospital**. Rich had nicknamed the "community" St Joseph Square. Now you know where the subtitle for the song "Peace" comes from. She then introduced **Steve Brunk**, an elder at Central Christian Church, who was also the one that they all paid their rent to on St Joseph's Square. Before Steve led us in an opening prayer, he described a picture in his mind of Rich seated among the heavenly orchestra, and wondered if the angels were probably asking, "Can you teach us how to do that 'Cup Song?' "

Reverend Matthew McGuinness, or Father Matt, told us that four years ago when he was the youth director for the Wichita Diocese, he first met Rich. "I never quite understood the friendship that developed between a long-haired, free-spirited, hard-living song writer, and a balding, conservative, midwestern Roman Catholic priest, but God taught me a long time ago that friendships don't grow in greenhouses. They grow like weeds - in places where you least expect them." He continued to describe a relationship that consisted of

talking, arguing, laughing, and praying. In the beginning of their friendship, Father Matt was not aware of Rich's fame in the CCM industry - he had no idea that you could buy one of Rich's CDs in any store in the country. He remembered particularly one night driving down the street with Rich, and Amy Grant's "Sing Your Praise To The Lord" came on the radio. " 'Gosh, I really like that song'..." (the laughs started warming up in the crowd) "...and Rich said, 'Well, thanks.' " (laughter turns to applause) "And I stopped and said, 'What do you mean well, thanks?', and he said, 'I wrote that.' " He was simply amazed at this ordinary man with these extraordinary gifts. "He used both the ordinary and the extraordinary to give witness and praise to God." Father Matt then led us in prayer.

What followed was one of the strongest spiritual offerings I have witnessed. **Ashley Cleveland** came out with **Michael W Smith** accompanying her on piano, and sang "Elijah." The strength didn't come from that incredible voice that she was still somehow able to share, as it was surely dampened ever so slightly by the emotion welling up. It didn't come from the dynamic and "Rich" piano arrangement that Smitty brought with such apparent ease. The strength came from the memory of Rich expounding the Spirit of the Living God - the same Spirit that was present there that evening in a way I haven't experienced but a few times in my life. It was a definite mountain-top experience - like the times when Brennan Manning would come to speak in Wichita for a week at a time before he got more famous (and sometimes you would see Rich sneak in the back of the room).

Next to share his memories of Rich was Friends University Chaplain, **Jim Smith**, who shared his house with Rich his last years in Wichita before moving to New Mexico. He wanted to share his times with Rich as best as he could remember it, "and there's a chance that I'll remember it better than he did." In addition to being chaplain, Jim also taught theology at Friends, and he told us that we couldn't imagine how "intimidating it is to have Rich Mullins in your theology class - a little like having Einstein in your physics class - I wanted to hand him the chalk and just sit down." After Beaker and Julie got married, Rich had stopped by Jim's house one day as he often did and casually asked, "Can I live here?" So Rich moved in. It is in the attic room apartment of Jim's house where the video for "Hold Me Jesus" was shot. In addition to touching Jim and his family's life, Rich was touched by theirs. Jim's five year old son has never known a world without Rich and only listens to "Uncle Rich's" music in the car. You can hear that love for Jim's daughter (who was born with several birth defects and not expected to live) in the song Rich wrote for her called "**Madeline's Song**" that many heard for the first time this last summer. Madeline often slept with her hands folded as if in prayer, and Rich made her his prayer partner as he would lean in and whisper his prayers in her ear. Telling his son Jacob that Uncle Rich had died and would not be coming home again, was one of the hardest things he ever had to do. Later Jacob said, "My heart is really full." After his

mother asked him why, he said, "Well, Jesus is in heaven, and Jesus is in my heart - and now Rich is in heaven, and he's in my heart, too. So my heart is really full."

Gary Rowe (another long time friend of Rich's from college days in Cincinnati) and Sam Howard then shared some quips they called "Rich on Rich." Some of my favorites were:

On marriage, "For people who are too weak to handle celibacy, God gives a spouse, and for people who are too weak to handle a spouse, God gives celibacy. So I'm pretty comfortable, but I wouldn't mind being married - especially between ten and two."

On the secret of his music, "If you can't be good, be loud." (Kerry liked that one, too.)

On the Bible, "I can understand why people have doubts about the Bible. It's a wierd, strange, goofy book."

Following these quips, they shared the writing from Rich's journal that we had just heard previously in the evening, as read by Craig West on Light 99. Gary and Sam closed with selections from letters sent to the online memorial book at [Calling Out Your Name](#), and then a letter written by Rich's brother, **David**, on behalf of the family.

The praise band came out and gave us their rendition of "Screen Door." ("the cup song") They also led us in singing the following songs:

*I Will Sing
Hope To Carry On
The Love Of God*

Next the lights went down and we listened to a tape of Rich singing "Peace." It was followed by a beautiful solo dance offering by the Friends University Dancer, **Melanie Buchanan**. She danced to the favorite of many Rich's fans, "Hold Me Jesus" as it was performed by **Everyman**, a praise band from Pleasant Valley United Methodist Church. (Some of the members of Everyman were cast members of the Canticle musical that was performed at Friends a couple weeks later). Everyman band members are: **Kevin Brocksieck**, **Jared Brown**, **Jay Lobaugh**, and **Kurtis Hinderliter** on vocals; **Jozelle Wallace**, keyboards; **Bill Suchan**, guitar; **Nicole-Capri Brocksieck**, bass guitar; and

Kevin Brightup, drums.

My friend Kathy introduced herself as **Kathy Sprinkle** to some, Kathy Sanders (from her days as morning DJ on Light 99) to others, and "a lot of you know me as that short little red-headed chick that hung around with Rich all the time and nobody ever understood what was going on between 'em." Kathy had spent most of the week after the accident at Rich's mom's house in support of the family. She then was involved in most of the memorials earlier this week as were many guests this evening (including Richmond and Nashville), and begged our forgiveness for their morbid humor, as they were "starting to call this the Rich Mullins Funeral Tour." Kathy first met Rich back in 1975 when they were both students at **Cincinnati Bible College**. After becoming good friends there, they were both involved in that "mid-seventies, hippie Christian commune thing where a whole bunch of us lived together ... we had eight people, six cats, two dogs, and my parents wouldn't set foot in the house." They were both involved in **Zion Ministries** which would be the catalyst for a praise album called "Behold The Man." On that recording was one of Rich's songs called "Sing Your Praise To The Lord", which would later make it into **Amy Grant's** hands. (Is it safe to assume you know the rest of that story?) "Nine albums and ten Dove Nominations later Rich is known as the poet of Contemporary Christian music, regarded as an activist for poor children, and a vigorous antagonist to all complacent Christians and *ALL* politicians." She described how Rich will be remembered by his love more than anything, and those funny little quirks and abilities to quote **Chesterton** and other great authors, and yet not seem to find his keys or his airline ticket. After a reading from Rich that was written less than 48 hours before his passing entitled "Scared Of The Dark", she introduced the third of the "Three Musketeers" - as she lovingly referred to herself, Rich, and Beth.

Beth Lutz (it was Beth Snell back in the Zion days) was one of those who lived in that "hippie Christian commune", but also was a member of the group that recorded the "Behold The Man" album. After briefly sharing her heart, she sang for us a capella. She just couldn't bear to sing the song with any accompanist but Rich, and hoped that we would hear his piano in our hearts. "Always Here With Me" was a beautiful praise song written by Rich and was only ever recorded by **Tony Melendez** (or at least Kathy thought so, she told me later) and was also sung by Beth at Rich's dad's funeral and Kathy's dad's funeral.

*When I walk through the valley, where the shadows hang like death,
Lord I will trust You're with me, and my soul will know You're rest.
'Til my cup is overflowing with the joy that comes from knowing,
You are here, You're always here with me.*

Reed Arvin, who produced eight of Rich's recordings, told us up front that it really seemed appropriate to be here in Kansas, as many times Rich had told Reed, "I just love Kansas." Reed then shared several stories of dealing with Rich in the studio, many of which described his constant reluctance to be mindful of the recording process. Although, many times Rich seemed aloof of the progress of an album (and would give his usual response "it don't make me no difference"), once Reed asked what he thought of a particular rough cut of "Ready For The Storm" (one of only four that Rich ever recorded that he didn't write). Rich's biting wit came through when he responded, "It sounds like 'I Am Ready For A Cocktail.' " Even though Reed produced 75 songs for him, he still felt like sometimes he didn't know him. Reed was the only person that told us about the "angry Rich Mullins." Sometimes though Rich made a conscious choice to be nice, "that particular choosing used up a lot of energy for him, and sometimes without warning, he would run out of nice, and get absolutely furious - an angry Rich Mullins was a sight to behold." Reed said he would miss that as much as anything, because it reminded him that, as Rich fumed about why the world was the way it was, he was just a sinner like you and me. Rich turned that discontent into art, and now he can ask God for us, why the world is the way it is.

Jimmy Abegg was the only member of the **Ragamuffin Band** to speak that evening. All the members of the Ragamuffins, past and present, must certainly have been nursing holes in their hearts, and I didn't really expect any of them to make that trip to the microphone. Like all the Ragamuffins, Jimmy would at times temporarily put on hold an existing career to join Rich in his mission to share the Gospel in music whenever he needed him. While sharing about being asked to join the "Brother's Keeper" project, Jimmy explained that he may not be able to do the recording and subsequent tour, because his daughter was having a really tough time and needed him. Rich and Gay and everyone said, "Bring her along." Jimmy then shared a very touching letter from his daughter, now 17, that she wrote after learning of Rich's death. In the letter, among fond memories, she shared of buying a small, simple St Francis pendant as a gift for Rich in appreciation for his love and friendship over their time together during the tour. She said that from that moment on, she never saw him without it, and couldn't help but wonder if he was wearing it the day of his accident. Jimmy read us a letter of remembrance of his own. It held many deep, loving images of Rich and their respect for each other. He told us how Rich had confided in him the desire to become an artist, and how Jimmy confided in him the desire to become a musician. "We agreed in that moment to try a little harder for our dreams." He closed by saying, "If I ever saw the eyes of Christ, I saw them staring at me through Rich. I will mark time with his passing, and thank God this barefooted pilgrim has reached his destination. Maybe when we get back together again, I'll have become a musician."

One of Rich's passions was **CIY**, or **Christ In Youth ministries**. **Andy Hansen** of CIY and his family was another of Rich's treasures. Andy told us, "Those who give of their time to minister to Junior High Youth are either eccentric or in love with young people - and [Rich] was both." He told us of Rich's generosity and how he often had no money in his pocket because he had given it all to others, or simply lost it. One of the threads in this patchwork quilt of Rich (as Sam Howard loved to remind us), was this attitude of priorities that would keep Rich so focused to giving and ministry, that he was constantly getting himself into situations of absent-mindedness. Take the example of moving to a trailer in New Mexico. While the world wondered out loud how he could possibly hope to continue his music ministry that way - all along Rich's primary concern was not that of the music industry, but of the horrid condition that most of his brothers and sisters in Christ were enduring on the Navajo reservation. Yet Rich still managed somehow to continue to minister to his fans with more music and another tour. This past summer tour, though this one time without the Ragamuffins, would also include ten CIY conferences on top of the already scheduled stops. Andy fought back the tears as he grieved aloud with us about not only the loss of a friend, but for the loss of the music and lyrics that was still to some. Rich had just announced at the last CIY conference in Illinois that he had written 10 new songs for a new recording (due to be recorded this fall) that focused specifically on Jesus. (The tentative title for this work was to be "Ten Songs For Jesus.") "It's hard not to ask 'Why God? Why now?' It may not break your heart to say goodbye, Rich, but it sure enough is breakin' ours." Andy had often asked Rich to sing "Elijah" at his funeral, and "did so just six or seven weeks ago. Now I breath these words, knowing that you've already crossed. I guess when the time comes for me, they'll just have to play the tape - while we sing it together in heaven. Enjoy the kingdom of light, Rich. May your music and memory continue to move us in our lives until we, too, get to hear the new stuff - on the other side."

Sam Howard came back out and introducing his mother said, "This is just something I never could have imagined happening in my life. The next speaker is my mother, and following that will be **Michael W Smith**."

Doris Howard's husband, **Maurice**, was the head pastor of Central Christian for many years. When their son Sam met Rich at Cincinnati Bible College, Rich then also later met Maurice, and it was that relationship that ultimately drew Rich to Wichita. Sadly, three months after Rich moved to Wichita to be discipled by him, Maurice died. Doris gave us a wonderful mother's perspective of Rich. She spoke of God revealing to her three truths the night after Maurice's death. "These three facts re-entered my mind last Saturday morning, and again I knew that death is non-negotiable, that God's will is perfect, and that you and I have to learn to walk in His perfection." Rich was then discipled by **Dr. Bill Allen**, and then he died. "...This was very puzzling to Rich. This week the thought had

crossed my mind of Dr. Bill and Maurice and Rich in heaven, no longer discussing the questions that none of us can answer, but delighting in knowing that now the answers are real to them, that they can enjoy the glory of God, and that both Greek and Hebrew are now fully understood." (laughter) Doris told us how Rich would often just show up unexpectedly at their house, like last Christmas. "He said he had many people to see that day and he could only stay for a little while, but you know what, he stayed all day. And what do you do when Rich stays all day? You talk, and you talk, and you talk, and you talk. And now as I look back on that day, I think what a special gift." Then there were the unexpected phone calls, sometimes into the wee hours of the morning. She told of one such time he had a new song, and really wanted to read it to her. "I slipped out to the kitchen table so as not to wake Maurice, and he started reading me these profound words, that to this day, is still my favorite song. And it's my favorite song, because if you knew Rich well, you knew how much of Rich was captured in these words. As I listened to the words my heart was just filled with an overwhelming emotion, my arms had Holy Spirit goosebumps, and my eyes had tears. And it's a moment that I've never forgotten, and these were the words: 'If I stand, let me stand on the promise that you will see me through, and if I fall let me fall into the grace that first brought me to you.' [sic]"

After a pause, **Michael W Smith** begins to play the intro for "If I Stand" and says, "This is also one of my favorite songs of Rich's." It is this writer's personal favorite, as well. I remember the first Rich Mullins concert I ever attended in 1989 at Central Christian. When he played that song, the entire audience (I didn't know at the time it was his home church) sang every word of the chorus in typical "Rich Concert Audience Wonderful Harmony." What I didn't remember this night of the memorial was that it was Michael playing the piano on the original recording of that song. Michael was accompanied by the entire Ragamuffin band. It was a little difficult to watch, as the usually exuberant band was very reserved and melancholy. My heart really ached for them, but they still did a wonderful job. Then Michael grabbed a guitar (I do believe this is the first time I've ever seen him play guitar) and led us in "Step By Step."

Sam then introduced one of Rich's favorite professors back at Cincinnati Bible College. **Dr. Stephen Hooks** (now at **Atlanta Christian College**) was "a person Rich kept in touch with throughout his life, and a person he turned to for a lot of counsel and theological discussion."

At this point, I must confess Kerry and I turned to each other and both agreed, this is getting really long. While it was certainly a night to remember, still we had been there over two hours, it was unusually warm in the arena, and now we're gonna have a sermon!? Well, I must also confess I soon forgot about the time and the temperature as Dr. Hooks opened up the Scriptures and preached about the Gospel of Christ about as bold and

clear as I've ever heard. What a wonderful message! He admonished us, "The bandstand is dark, and the liturgy has been silenced - forever, some are saying, by the demon we call death. Do you really believe that? Do you really think that Rich has written his last lyric and played his last melody? Do you think something so rude, so crude, so painfully ordinary as death can silence the songs of a saint?" He then continued to share the secret that Rich carried in his heart and that we share - "it stood at the heart of his 'Creed' and it stands at the heart of the Gospel. 'The dead in Christ shall rise.' " Through the stories of Jesus' conquering death, one by one, Dr. Hooks led us eagerly - just like a man certain of victory because of overwhelming evidence would plead his case to a court of law. "And you know what? [Jesus is] not through yet. In 1 Corinthians 15:20, Paul writes, 'but now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept.' His resurrection is but the first of many more that will follow. For the scriptures tell us that Jesus is going to make one final visit to the cemetery. And He's not coming with flowers and tears. But with a shout and a trumpet sound." The sermon was peppered with cheers and laughter, and the thought flashed through my mind of this pastor/teacher and Rich in fierce debates and fervent prayer. After more wonderful oratory, he concluded, "As we gather tonight to honor Rich's passing over Jordan, some would seek to console us by reminding us that he will live on - in his music, and in our memories. But I'm here to tell you he lives on in a far greater way than that. There's a Ragamuffin loose in heaven. (applause) There are bare feet on the streets of gold. And I tell ya' heaven will never be the same. The restless pilgrim who once wept as a man who is longing to go home is finally there. He is at last set free to compose that music which he once called 'higher than the songs that I can sing'. Well you can sing them now Rich. So sing them. Sing them well, sing them loud, let the hammer dulcimer be heard all over heaven. Let heaven's choir sing their praise to the Lord. And as you look back, and watch the stars as they fade to the flicker of a candle, let angels above join with the saints below, and declare to the world - our God is an awesome God!"

If there was any doubt remaining for any person within the sound of Dr. Hooks voice, then he, at least temporarily, wiped clear any trace of it. Before the sermon, I was sad and tired - but following that clear proclamation of the Gospel, I had nothing but joy and a full measure of that indescribable peace.

Following the sermon was a video montage that alternated between Rich expressing his views on a wide variety of subjects and sound clips of some of his most profound songs - "Sometimes By Step", "If I Stand", "The Love Of God", "Calling Out Your Name", and "Verge of a Miracle." It concluded with the entire original version of "Elijah" (from Rich's first album).

The Central Christian praise band came back, and as they led us in "I See You", the

Friends University Dancers brought the song to life. They gave the song feet and hands and action, much like we are to do with God's Word.

The service was closed with Sam Howard reading the lyrics to "Be With You" that read in part...

*Everybody each and all
We're gonna die eventually
It's no more or less our faults
Than it is our destiny
So now Lord I come to you
Asking only for Your grace
You know what I've put myself through
All those empty dreams I chased*

*And when my body lies in the ruins
Of the lies that nearly ruined me
Will You pick up the pieces
That were pure and true
And breathe Your life into them
And set them free.*

*And when You start this world over
Again from scratch
Will You make me anew
Out of the stuff that lasts
Stuff that's purer than gold is
And clearer than glass could ever be
Can I be with You
Can I be with You*

After the service (which lasted right at three hours), there was plenty of hugging and visiting and tears - mostly of joy. I got to introduce Kathy Sprinkle to Kerry Livgren (she always wanted to meet him), and we shared "Rich" stories. I greeted several friends, some of whom were able to come from great distances, though I didn't get to see everybody, I appreciate your letting know by email that you made it.

Danl Blackwood, Chris and Melanie Castleberry

Some of my cyber-friends actually came all the way from Houston, and even made the [Wichita Eagle front page](#) the following morning. [Chris](#) and [Melanie Castleberry](#) (who were one of only ten addresses when the RichMailList started almost three years ago) and I got to meet face-to-face for the first time. They even brought their five kids, who were wonderfully patient, even though we visited for another hour after an already long evening. I relied on their memories and notes and proofing to help me with this review. It was a wonderful service, and it has enabled me to better cherish the memory of the ministry of one Rich Mullins.

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[RichMailList 168]: Memorial - Nashville, TN

↑ kidbrothers.net/rmml/rmml168.html

Date: 26 September 1997

To: RichMailList

Subject: [RichMailList 168]: Memorial - Nashville, TN

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From: [Scott Rice](#)

Subject: Nashville Memorial Service

Date: Fri, 26 Sep 1997 14:09:51

Dan;

First of all, let me just say thanks for all of the messages I have received as part of the Rich Mailing list. I really appreciate all of the information you have shared, and appreciate the long hours you have spent creating the memorial page (which by the way is incredible). I know Rich would have been pleased and honored.

I first heard about Rich's passing on the lawn of Christ Pres. here in Nashville at their annual Festival of the Arts, so it seems appropriate that this would be the place where his memorial service was held and where I could say goodbye. I thought you would like to know that the Christian Music "family" (as Gay mentioned in her comments) was

well

represented. It is easy to see the impact Rich had on his profession

and those he came in contact with, and I think if anything can be brought out of this tragedy, it would be for the CCM community to re-examine its priorities and remember that its purpose is something

higher than to just "make a few bucks off of Jesus" (as Reed Arvin so wonderfully put it).

This is a brief rambling summary of the service. Its really unorganized, but I tried to record my impressions as soon as I could.

Lots of Music, some by Rich, some about Rich, some that was a favorite

of Rich. The service began with Samuel Barber's 'Adagio for Strings'.

Then Michael W. Smith led the congregation in "Awesome God" and "Step by

Step". Afterwards, Jim Schmidt (sp) shared some memories and opened the

service. Terry Hemmings then read some favorite scripture of Rich's

(Isaiah 43 and Isaiah 60 are the two passages I can remember now, although there were a few more). Jim Chaffee then spoke of Rich's "closet Catholicism", and asked the congregation to kneel on the kneeling benches attached to the pews as he lead the opening prayer, at

the close of which "Amazing Grace" was played on the bagpipes.

Ben

Pearson spoke of taking that gorgeous photograph of Rich in the sunflower field holding his dulcimer. Bernie Sheahan lovingly read some

prose that Rich had written for a promotional version of The World As

Best As I Remember It (which by the way I had dug up this morning before

the service and thought was just perfect to remember Rich by).

Gay
Quisenberry very lovingly shared some memories. Ashley Cleveland made
it through "Elijah", which I'm sure was incredibly difficult.
Then the
Ragamuffins (or at least some of them) read a piece of prose Rich
had
recently written called "Scared of the Dark". Rick Elias sang
"Man of
No Reputation", a song he had written that he said Rich had often
asked
him to sing. Phil Madeira read a poem he had written for Rich
entitled
"Cruel Mystery". The congregation then sang "It Is Well With My
Soul"
(which really brought back a lot of memories for me. The last
time I
saw Rich in concert was here at the Ryman with Ashley Cleveland
and
Carolyn Arends, and he ended the concert by having the whole crowd
join
him on this hymn. It was one of the most moving things I have
ever
experienced, and it was even more meaningful today). One of the
Kid
Brothers of St. Frank (I'm sorry, I can't remember his name) then
told a
little bit about the organization and its goals, and how Rich
tried to
be a living example of Franciscan Spirituality. Reed Arvin
eloquently
read from Orthodoxy by G.K Chesterton, and shared some powerful
impressions of Rich. Amy Grant was scheduled to sing "Double Good
To
You", but sang her own "Somewhere Down The Road" from her latest
album,
which I thought was much more appropriate ("Why, Why, Why, does it
go
this way?. . . . "Somewhere down the road there'll be answers to

the
questions" very moving). Alyssa Loukota from Compassion and
Kathy
Sprinkle then shared some memories, and Phil Keaggy played "Hold
Me
Jesus". At the end of the service, a video screen played the
video for
"Creed" as well as some comments Rich had included on that video.
It
gave me Goosebumps to hear that song and the comments that Rich
had
recorded before it loudly reverberating through the sanctuary.
The
passion and commitment in his voice still reverberate through the
words
and music, even though he is not here to sing them himself. I
never met
Rich Mullins, but I knew him. His words and music still echo
through me
to the very depths of my soul, and I felt this service was a very
fitting tribute to his memory.

"May the angels of his presence keep your heart"

Scott Rice
scott.rice@apbenefits.com

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[RichMailList 167]: Memorial - Johnson City, TN

↑ kidbrothers.net/rmml/rmml167.html

Date: 26 September 1997

To: RichMailList

Subject: [RichMailList 167]: Memorial - Johnson City, TN

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Date: Fri, 26 Sep 1997 10:43:50

From: [Jeannie Goins](#)

Subject: Memorial for Rich September 25

Dear Danl,

What I would give to be sending you a review of a Rich Mullins concert instead of a summary of a Memorial Service to him, but God had better things in mind for Rich. Seeing the steeple of Seeger Chapel on the campus of Milligan College in Johnson City, TN had always heightened my sense of anticipation of a wonderful concert, but last night it started the flood of tears instead.

I arrived early and took a seat near the front. Instead of being full of instruments, including that wonderful hammer dulcimer, the stage was nearly bare - a piano, an acoustic guitar, one small amp and a podium. A group of six students called Heritage practiced their songs, and I was not

the only
one already wiping tears as they did so.

About 300 people filled the chapel. Heritage rendered their first acapella song, "I Will Sing", and Wes Dillon of Milligan read a short eulogy, giving the dates of Rich's earthly life and reminding us of what took him from us. Then Dr. Bruce Montgomery gave Reflections of Rich. Dr. Montgomery was Pastor of Rich's home church in Whitewater, IN when Rich was in his teens (about 13-17, he said).

He said Rich would compose beautiful classical music, even at that young age, but no one would publish it.

One of Rich's favorite things to do was to sit on the corner of the very organized Dr. Montgomery's desk and rearrange everything on it, just to see how long it would take Dr. Montgomery to run him out of his office, sometimes literally dragging him out!

He recalled Rich's first youth sermon - it was going to be simply "Ship up or shape out" (typical Rich, straight to the point!), but Dr. Montgomery helped Rich add a little more text to the sermon to take up the allotted time. He said he rarely heard Rich sing back then, and when he asked him recently why he didn't, Rich told him he did not consider himself a good singer; he didn't then and he still didn't! Rich was always honest - always himself. He was not impressed with himself.

"Seminary Girl" was the first song Dr. Montgomery knew of Rich writing when at Cincinnati Bible College. This was - what else? - a PROTEST of the dorm hours at the school. He also composed one entitled "I Write Songs", rebelling against CBC trying to make a preacher out of him!

Then Dr. Montgomery read a paragraph from an article by John Fischer that will appear in the November issue of CCM. I can't recall any of the words, except, "Goodbye, Rich".

Heritage then sang "If I Stand". "If I weep, let it be as a man who is longing for his home". Rich is longing no more.

The next speaker was Michael Johnson, who has been a friend of Rich's for ten years. He and Rich had hitchhiked and driven across the country more than once together. He remembered Rich as humble and poor. He told of Rich wearing bowling shoes, patched with duct tape. For Rich, he said, a shopping spree meant a trip to K-Mart to buy \$3.00 shoes and package of V-neck T-shirts!

Even though they were close, Michael was unaware of Rich's position in the world of Christian music, because it was something Rich never spoke of. When he asked Rich one time how the music business was going, Michael got the reply "Okay, but they keep sending me more money!" This, he said, was

not something Rich was impressed with. One day when Michael visited Rich at home (I assumed his mother's home), he was amazed at the room full of awards and gold records. He hollered to Rich, "Hey, you're really big time!" To which Rich replied "Yeah, you wanna sandwich?"

Rich was passionate about life, his music, his family, meeting needs, and being a servant. Rich Mullins was truly a pastor.

But Rich Mullins was not perfect, he assured us. For one, he was a bad motorcycle driver! And he often alighted from his motorcycle without putting down the kickstand - proof of the forgetfulness Rich was known for.

And he reminded us of Rich's humanity in a comment about stinky feet! It brought a roar of laughter through our tears.

Mr. Johnson had been at the family visitation at Rich's home church in Indiana on Thursday. He now read comments written by Rich's family (at this point, I listened well but wrote little):

In spite of his faults, Rich Mullins truly understood what God's grace means - salvation. He knew he desperately needed God.

He was a reluctant performer. He almost refused to go on his first tour, with Amy Grant.

Rich was thoroughly complex - but incredibly simple. He was an antagonist to complacent Christians and all politicians.

But in the end, Rich Mullins will be best remembered for how he LOVED. His mission has become his legacy.

Next, Heritage sang "Ready for the Storm". Then "Elijah" (the old version) was played, and with the speakers located in the balcony, it sounded as if Rich were singing to us from Heaven.

After congregational worship with "Step by Step" and "Awesome God", a soloist sang "Hold Me, Jesus" and closed in prayer.

The crowd filed out silently and returned to a world that will never be the same.

Yours in Christ,

Jeannie Goins

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Chattanooga, Tennessee Concert Review

↑ kidbrothers.net/reviews/chattanooga.html

Morris Hill Baptist Church

Rhonda Miskowski

Over 700 people packed the Morris Hill Baptist Church in Chattanooga, Tenn. to witness an unforgettable performance of Rich Mullins and his Ragamuffin Band. The eclectic band, any of whom could have headlined their own concert, kicked off by treating the audience to a few of their own tunes. The versatile Ragamuffins included Jimmy Abegg on guitar and mandolin; Phil Madiera on accordion, keyboards, and guitar; Rick Elias on guitar and harmonica; Aaron Smith (77's) on the drums; Mark Robertson (Altar Boy s) on bass guitar and standing bass; and Michael Aukofer on bongos. Jimmy A did a few songs from his latest album including "Perfect World" and "Small Touch of Love." Rick donned his harmonica for the highlight of the Ragamuffin set "Man of No Reputation."

As usual, there was no big introduction or grand entrance as Mullins strolled onto the stage. Taking his place among the band, the crowd erupted with applause. His companion Beaker made the same almost unnoticed entrance, and sat down with lap dulcimer in hand. The shoeless Mullins wore a T-shirt and shorts as he changed his instruments with almost every song. From piano to dulcimer to guitar, Rich and band covered Mullins' classics as well as his latest hits from A Liturgy, a Legacy, and a Ragamuffin Band: "Here in America," "The Color Green," and "Hold Me Jesus."

Rich's anecdotes between songs were warm, honest, profound, and hysterical, and his boyish charm won the crowd over immediately. Dividing the church in three sections for a fun round (one section sang "I'm Gonna Sing, Sing, Sing" another "Swing Low Sweet Chariot" and the last "When the Saints Come Marching In"), Rich seemed as much entertained by the audience as they were by him. And when Rich led in the worshipful "Holy, Holy, Holy" and "It is Well," no one gave a second thought as to who was being entertained but only Who was being praised.

Beaker got a chance to show off his guitar talent on "Boy Like Me, Man Like You." Concluding the song, he and the band left Rich alone to speak about the driving forces behind their tour with Compassion International. He shared details about his recent trip to Colombia and spoke of the conditions there and the kids who live in them. Rich called what Compassion was doing there "nothing short of a miracle." (For information about sponsoring a Compassion child, call 800/336-7676.)

The band reappeared with Rich to perform "Land of My Sojourn" during which he left the stage while the band vamped and came back with a fresh Diet Coke in hand - a stunt true to his lifestyle and one no other Christian artist could execute so successfully.

Rich stood at his piano for "If I Stand" and his fellow virtuosos abandoned their instruments to sing back-up. "Awesome God" followed and the multitude cheered loudly with its familiar introduction. Rich then belted out a true concert fave "I See You," coaxing the audience to sing along. He stepped down from the platform still encouraging the onlookers to sing out. He walked to the back of the crowded church and disappeared from sight as the fans kept singing and the band kept playing. One member at a time, the band exited the stage leaving the audience to sing a capella. Rich didn't wait long to hit the stage again, moving his piano to lead the still singing audience in a chorus of "Sometimes by Step."

The singer/songwriter/poet/philosopher extraordinaire took careful time to explain the inspiration behind his next song as he made his way over to the hammer dulcimer. He and writing companion/long time pal, Beaker, were discussing what it was they believed in when they came to the same basic conclusion reached by Christians thousands of years before them.

"Some things are absolutely true... these are the things we're sure of...", Mullins stated emphatically as he began hammering away the introduction to "Creed" on his dulcimer. The crowd's reaction testified to the songs' popularity and the shared faith of the fans. It was the best performed song of the night by the band whose performance was flawless throughout the show.

The concert was full of spontaneous revelations, profound thoughts, and incredible talent, seasoned by Rich's rare candor and honesty. Obviously intrigued by the man who says so much with so few words and seemingly with such little effort, the audience demanded more than one encore.

Finally departing, the crowd left uplifted by the music, challenged by the lyrics, awestruck by the talent, and enriched by the artists.

Review by [Rhonda Miskowski](#)

[Return to Calling Out Your Name](#)

Rich Mullins Mailing List Archive

↑ kidbrothers.net/rmml/rmml13.html

Date: 18 May 1995

To: RichMailList

From: Danl Blackwood

Subject: [RichMailList 13]: An Evening with Rich Mullins (5/12)

An Evening with Rich Mullins
Wichita Boathouse, Wichita, KS
Friday Night, 12 May 95

The [Farewell to Wichita concert](#) sold out so fast (in 8 hours last April 1st) that even Rich was surprised. He was concerned about all the fans who, for some reason or another, didn't get a chance to get tickets. This was one of the reasons (if not *the* reason) that a special "Evening with Rich Mullins" was planned for the night before the concert. It was to be an informal (no formal concert), small (only 300 tickets), catered (by Spears, a local Christian owned restaurant), gathering for fans to meet and greet not only Rich and Beaker, but the Ragamuffin band. The tickets for this event took a couple days to sell out, and this really surprised me. I figured many people would jump at the chance to meet Rich, have dinner, and all for only 10 dollars; *and* it was held at the prestigious Wichita Boathouse (home of Bill Koch's dry-docked America3, and collection of other America's Cup memorabilia). There was an awful lot of competition that weekend, as well. In addition to a rare glimpse of the 6th operational B-2 bomber at McConnell Air Force (christened the Spirit Of Kansas by honorable Kansas congressmen Bob Dole and Todd Tiahrt), and the first really nice weekend weather-wise; Wichitans also had the first weekend of the River Festival to attend (a huge annual week and half long event in Wichita).

I couldn't miss the chance to see Rich both nights. So after camping out twice (getting there at 5am) for tickets for both events (I've never done this before in my life), we showed up Friday night an hour early to the Wichita Boathouse. We were looking for fellow r.m.c.-ers who found out about the Friday night dinner through the unofficial mailing list. Zac Croy and his friend Justin Gilbreath were both expedient in responding to two spare tickets to the Friday night dinner, and after a couple quick posts, we planned the rendezvous. Actually they met me first earlier in the day at my office to transact the tickets and get directions to the Boathouse. Zac drove (believe it or not) from Michigan to be there, and Justin came from Oklahoma. Zac's drive wasn't completely as outrageous as it

sounds, since he was on his way home to Oklahoma City from school anyway, but it was still way cool for them to be able to come and meet Rich, and way cool for me to be able to pull it off for them. (I LOVE THIS INTERNET THING!!). Anyway on to the evening...

The "Evening With Rich Mullins" was just that; the fairly small room (upstairs meeting room of the Boathouse) had just enough room for 300 people. There was a wedding rehearsal right before this dinner, and the people leaving were more than a little surprised to see 300 people waiting to move in. There were not really enough tables, and barely enough chairs and some people still had to sit on the floor. The dinner was a buffet-style meats, cheeses, and fruit bar, so it was not really the sit-down dinner I kind of expected, but it was good. That was really OK, though, because I spent most of the evening milling around and visiting.

I have just recently (thanks to my education on rec.music.christian) become a big fan of quite a few alternative Christian rock bands, and was excited to meet and visit with some of their members tonight; who just happened to be part of the ragamuffin band. I asked Jimmy Abegg what Vector album I should buy (having just read about them on THE LIGHTHOUSE electronic MAGAZINE (TLeM)). He said I should wait for the new box set coming soon (Time Flies: The Vector Collection).

I met Mark Robertson, and visited at length about a lot of stuff. Being a former bass player myself, we had more than just the love of Christ in common. I hadn't seen Rick Elias there so far, and Mark informed me that Rick was filling in on guitar that night for Randy Stonehill. It seems that during the Dove Awards week in Nashville, Randy fell off a stage into an orchestra pit, and broke his arm (Ouch!). Rick would however make it to the concert tomorrow night. A couple possible future (read: not for sure yet) projects coming up may include a Ragamuffins album without Rich (while he pursues his teaching ministry with the Navaho Indians next year), and maybe a solo album for Rick with Mark and Aaron as the rhythm section. Those albums, *if* they happen, would be definite additions to this writer's collection. Also Mark's band, This Train, has a new album coming out in a few weeks on Liquid Disc records called You're Soaking In It. Another album to watch for that is a definite must-have is from Rick Elias' wife, Linda and her partner Lesley Glassford. Tuesday's Child, as they are called, debut album is to be released soon on the Benson label, and Mark said the musicians on the sessions were top-notch. I didn't write down the names, but I recognized them as huge in the mainstream studio biz.

I got real surprise a few weeks ago when I realized the ragamuffin drummer was also the drummer for one of my most recent favs - The 77's. Aaron Smith was very gracious and fun to visit with, even though I almost gushed too much at how much I enjoyed his rhythm work with the 77's. He even helped me tease my wife, when I called her over to meet him, and introduced him as the drummer of the band she hates. (I've been driving Diane crazy

listening to the 77's 1-2-3 box set and Drowning With Land In Sight at full tilt; she doesn't really care for the really hard rock, even though Whiteheart is her absolute favorite). After teasing her a little, Aaron was genuinely interested in just what was her favorite music. When visiting with Mark, he paid Aaron quite the compliment. It seems some people had told Mark that he and Aaron were the best rhythm section they'd ever heard. Mark simply explained to them that Aaron and *any* bass player would be the best rhythm section they'd ever heard.

When Rich got there I was quick to deliver the letters forwarded to me by members of the mailing list before he got mobbed. He seemed a little surprised, but was very interested to know that there was a Cyberspace connection to his ministry. I, however, was not surprised at his being a little overwhelmed, considering how truly humble and accessible his demeanor has always been, and will become even more with the advent of his new "job" as a teacher in the Navajo nation. It really makes sense now that in these last few days before he moves that the "official" word (from an interview in the Wichita Eagle newspaper by Stacey Beattie Stamps) is he going to the Navajo Indian Reservation. No mention of details (where before New Mexico was mentioned), because in Rich's words, "If I knew I would tell you." I asked him (because my wife was really curious) if he was a little freaked about leaving. He said he was, but that he was more anxious to begin his new adventure. We didn't get to visit very long, but I was sure to tell him how much his ministry meant to me, and to all of us.

Before accommodating several dozen autograph seekers, Rich and Beaker had performed two new songs from the new album, Brother's Keeper. The largest majority of the autographs were signed on a special limited edition (only 900 CD's pressed), pre-release copy of this second ragamuffin band album that was available for purchase tonight and tomorrow night for \$16. If you saw the Releasextra presenting Rich Mullins last summer, on page 7 you saw a photo of Rich in front of his red 1966 Chevy pickup truck. It was parked in front of the train stop (which proudly says "Wichita" across the top) at the Great Plains Transportation Museum in downtown Wichita. Another pose during this shoot is on the special cover of the CD. The inside (which includes lyrics) is like a scrapbook of photos and names that are remembered and thanked; most very local to Wichita. At the concert tomorrow night, Gay Quisenberry (Rich's manager) will tell us that these were a special release made especially for Wichitans from her, Reunion Records, and Rich. The official release date for Brother's Keeper is July 20th, and will be the exact same album we now have, but with a different cover. (Stay tuned for a chance to get a copy of this CD for yourself).

The rest of the evening was basically a song-request duet by Rich and Beaker as they sang and played guitar and piano. The ragamuffins had the night off as just the two of

them were playing songs by request from "anyone that won't get to be there tomorrow night". I didn't really keep a set list, but any fan of Rich can imagine the songs that were requested - Screen Door, Here In America, The Color Green, Awesome God - just to name a few. Obviously, even though he wrote them, Rich was not prepared to play *any* request, and he graciously declined a few. A request for Pictures In The Sky was refused when, thinking quickly, he scolded in jest, "Hey, you already had a request". (Rats, that was one I wanted to hear.) The Love Of God was requested, and Rich exclaimed, "I just heard that one on the radio today, and I haven't sung it in a while. Maybe I need to." ... and he did. Someone hollers "Carry On!", and Rich spontaneously begins banging out on the piano, "Carry On My Wayward Son, there'll be peace when you are done...", and continues including vocally scat-singing the drum intro of the song. That drew a huge laugh from this crowd that instantly recognized the huge 70's chart-topper from another favorite-son group - Kansas. Then he exclaims, "Ohhhh! You mean I'll Carry On. Duhh!" (Can't wait to tell Chris; good friend and Kerry Livgren's brother.) It got even better, though. As he was singing, he forgot the words, and was prompted by members of the audience. We all enjoyed that. He finished up with Sometimes By Step (with all of us singing, of course), a sincere heart-felt word of thanks, and then sat through another long line of autograph seekers and well-wishers (many of whom also brought cards for him).

The evening was fantastic, and was surpassed only by the Mother's Day weekend surprise I had for my wife as we left, not for home, but for a romantic evening at a really cool local Bed and Breakfast (I got the baby-sitter set up and everything; she had no clue). Rich's spontaneity and humor was surpassed only by his ability to share his faith, and encourage us to do the same. As I have said many times, I really like Rich's ministry more than I like his music - and I like his music A LOT!

Stayed tuned for the [last Rich Mullins concert in Wichita](#) for a long time (maybe ever? - please say it isn't so!).

Go back to [Dan's Music Page](#)

Go back to [Rich Mullins Archive Page](#)

Rich Mullins Mailing List Archive

↑ kidbrothers.net/rmml/rmml16.html

Date: 21 May 1995

To: RichMailList

From: Danl Blackwood

Subject: [RichMailList 16]: Rich Mullins Farewell To Wichita (5/13)

Rich Mullins Farewell To Wichita
Century II Concert Hall, Wichita, KS
Saturday Night, 13 May 95

Well, here we are. Rich's last live concert in Wichita for possibly a very long time. Rich graduated Sunday Night (May 14), and then took off Monday morning. However, just because it was Wichita's last chance for a while, doesn't mean it has to be your last chance. Starting September 14th, 1995, Rich and the Ragamuffins begin the 63-city Brother's Keeper tour. Ashley Cleveland and Carolyn Arends will be special guests on this International Bible Society sponsored tour. Tour dates were previously posted to r.m.c (rec.music.christian newsgroup), and will be posted again soon. I will certainly attend one (or maybe a couple) of the dates, but for now I'll just remember one of the most entertaining and uplifting weekends I've had in a long time. The following is part two of my review of Rich's weekend. (See part one - [\[RichMailList 13\]: An Evening with Rich Mullins](#))

The evening was divided into two parts. The first half featured Rich and his acquaintances/classmates from Friends University. The second half was Rich and the Ragamuffin band. The concert was to start at 7:30pm, but was late getting started partly because it took a while to fill the sold-out house. I managed to get second row, dead center seats.

Finally, Kathy Sanders, long-time friend of Rich, and morning personality on KTLI-FM Light 99 (our local CCM radio station), came out to get things rolling. After a few announcements she introduced Gay Quisenberry, Rich's manager. Gay told us about, the special Brother's Keeper CD on sale in the lobby (again, see previous post), and then introduced Rich.

Here In America - [LLR] (see album key below)

Rich came out wearing just jeans, a long-john type white shirt and no shoes (normal attire for Rich), sat down at the piano, and started singing. For someone who claims to not play

piano or guitar very well, he sure plays well and with a lot of emotion.

Hallelujah Chorus from Handel's Messiah

Rich was joined by Brad Martin, Sherri Howard McCready, Jared Brown, and Nicki Lungren. They were all visibly nervous. but it just added to the dynamics. They were reading the music (single pages stapled together), and as they got to the end of a page, they would rip them off and throw them. It was really cute. My pastor saw this on TV (as Channel 12 news was there for part of it), and said it came across very well. During the one part where the tenor part creeps higher and higher, Rich was beginning to struggle, and then Jared took over, and nailed it beautifully. All of the singers had marvelous voices.

Screen Door - [PIS]

For this song, the five vocalists had a table brought out and five large plastic drinking cups. Rich began with all the cups on his side of the table, and started the cup-slapping, hand-clapping rhythm pattern which included handing one cup to the next person after completing a certain sequence; all the while singing the acappella classic. They did a great job keeping there places while transferring the cups from one end of the table to the other using the intricately arranged rhythm (very few goofs). The crowd loved it.

(Title??)

For the next song they were joined by Michael Aukofer on percussion, and a young oriental man on piano, who Rich said had a name he couldn't pronounce. I think his name was something like Takuro (I asked later, and it didn't really help). The praise song they played was unfamiliar to me, but none the less well done. It spoke about the fact that there isn't anybody so bad that the Lord can't help them.

What Susan Said - [WBRv2]

Rich went solo on the piano again for a song about his good friend and writing cohort, Beaker. I must say, the stage crew, who I assume were all Friends students, did an outstanding job keeping things going smoothly; especially with the constant changes in the well choreographed set list.

Boy Like Me / Man Like You - [WBRv1]

Then Beaker sauntered out with his guitar, and the two of them sang together.

(Title??)

Next there was some drastic rearranging as three vibes/xylophone type instruments along with percussion and Rich's hammered dulcimer were prepared for a song that Rich and Beaker wrote in Ireland as an experiment for this instrumentation. It was very cool, especially if you enjoy Rich's dulcimer playing like I do. While trying to introduce the song using the dulcimer mike that was almost to low to reach, he asked "Can you hear me?"

Some people answered, "No", to which he immediately replied, "Well, Listen!" :-)

Hard - [LLR]

Back to just a trio with Rich on piano, Brad, and Jared.

If I Stand - [WH/SE]

When the crowd sang on the chorus on this (at Rich's request), it was simply beautiful. It was hard to imagine anything better, until later. This song has one of my favorite lines that I used to use in my signature, "The stuff of earth competes for the allegiance I owe only to the Giver of all good things".

As the curtains closed (for preparation of part two of the concert), Rich then began to tell us about the Friends University Ballet / Wichita Ballet Theater. In trying to describe the ballet group, Rich shared that growing up in the Friends Church, they had no dancers. (Everybody giggled a little.) Then later his family went to a Christian Church - still no dancers (Everybody laughed a little more.) Even though he thought it was a little hoity-toity, he really liked this ballet troupe.

Before they danced, he wanted us to experience something really cool. Growing up on a farm, he says, was most times very hard. "There are so many easier ways to lose money." :-) Sometimes he'd be out in the field on the tractor, and way off in the distance, there'd be a big storm coming. The way he described the coming storm was incredible. You could really see, hear, and feel it; right down to the raindrops finally hitting the hot tractor and sizzling. But it didn't stop there. He wanted us to recreate the storm passing over. First he divided us into four groups. He had three people stand up to help divide the crowd (I got to be the middle guy). While he described to us what to do, he kept practicing all those "teacher sayings", like - "Who's Talking?" and "All right, everybody listen up." It was really funny. Anyway each group would, at his direction, make four different sounds with their hands. 1) Rubbing your palms together 2) Snapping your fingers rapidly 3) Patting the heel of one hand with the other, and 4) Slapping your legs wildly. In addition to making these sounds, we had to watch closely for directions to get louder or softer. After practicing each sound, we began with group 1, then 2, then 3, then 4, each making the first sound. Then each group one by one changing to the next sound, and so on and so on. He had also told us, if we concentrate we might even get wet. Well, it sounded so cool, that I fully expected any minute to get soaked. Then each group one by one reversed the order of sounds, as the storm blew by. I had seen Rich do this before, but never with quite as much realism in fantasy.

The fantasy and majesty didn't end there. As the curtains opened, the stage was bare except for four young men and four young women, who later, joined by four more young women, took us on a sacred journey through ballet. The Mullins medley to which they

danced included:

52:10 - [LLR]

I See You - [WBRv1]

Step By Step - [WBRv1]

The emotion and human drama was presented in a very spiritual and worshipful way. (And I don't even care for ballet that much.) The only other prop on stage was a digital projection of a huge spinning earth at the back of the stage. The crowd was awestruck, and there was barely a peep where just minutes earlier we were hootin' and hollerin'.

After a "10 minute break" that lasted a half hour, the curtains opened, and we were treated to the River City Mandolin Quartet. One of the members was Rich's neighbor, and he asked them to join him for the concert. They played a couple classical selections, and one jazz tune. During the jazz number, called Slip And Slide, Jimmy Abegg comes sneaking out from back stage looking like a sod-buster in his jeans, suspenders, long-john style shirt (identical to Rich's), and hat. He had a broom, and danced and swept and then strolled on back. The quartet was a tight ensemble, and it was obvious this was more than a hobby for these guys. It was, like most of the evening so far, very different from most concerts I'd ever been to, but the 3000 plus in attendance agreed it was an excellent variety show.

With little delay, and less circumstance, Rich and the Ragamuffins took the stage and played and sang and ministered for another hour and a half (and it was already 9:40). The remainder of the evening was very much like the last Ragamuffin Tour. All the Ragamuffins from the last tour were there, except Phil Madeira and Billy Crockett. I just learned that Billy will not be on this tour. Anybody know what he's up to, besides his solo career? Phil will be replaced this tour by Lee Lungren. Some of you may be familiar with Lee and his wife Nicki (singing earlier). Lee and Nicki (a.k.a. Avenue G) have been involved in one way or another with Rich's music and recordings for a long time. In fact, one of the new songs on Brother's Keeper (co-written by Rich, Lee, and Nicki) is about their new son, Eli. Checkout the complete list of Ragamuffins and the set list below.

Some of the highlights of the set --

Rich had a huge backup choir on some songs (especially when he asked us to sing) - 3000 of us! Awesome God was (see if you can guess) ... awesome, as were many others.

On the title track Brother's Keeper, Rich got to the second verse and, with mouth open,

just went blank. Beaker rushed over and mouthed "Roof!" (See previous post for Brother's Keeper lyrics). Rich's sheepish grin acknowledged our delight in sharing (what I used to call when I was singing for a living) one of those three-second nightmares.

A couple times Rich shared with us his heart about faith and life and the Gospel. This is the main reason I enjoy seeing him live - to hear the wisdom of a man truly committed to following and emulating Jesus Christ. It's such an uplifting experience. While in Nashville, Rich and Beaker had witnessed newsclips of the Summer of Mercy here in Wichita. He said it really touched him. As the abortion issue, and other issues continue, he really wanted us to pray that hearts would be changed; that people would learn to respond with compassion instead of anger. He asked us not to put our faith in the Republican party, or in the Democratic Party. We only put those guys in office to keep them off the streets. :-) We must put our faith in God. It's the only way things are going to change. He also shared that it's not our choice of music that makes us Christian. It's the will of God. People often ask him, "Rich, how can you know the will of God?". His simple answer is, "I read the Bible". Rich was not as nervous during the Ragamuffin portion of the concert. As a matter of fact, there was a noticeable feeling of peace and comfort, as Rich continued to minister in words and music. I assume many of us that night were thinking the same thing - whoever Rich is going to be teaching is in for a real treat.

He closed with "Creed", and humbly walked off stage beaming and waving. Of course, you can imagine the commotion that followed. It wasn't too much longer before Rich walks out by himself, later calling to Beaker to join him. He informs us that he doesn't do encores, and that we'll have to do it. They proceeded to lead us in a most inspiring praise and worship service. We all sang a half a dozen songs from traditional to contemporary, including his favorite medley/round. The crowd is divided again this time into three groups. One group sings "Sing, Sing, Sing", one sings "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot", and one sings "Saints Go Marching In". Finally (it was almost 11:30pm) he says, "Look, I've got to graduate tomorrow, and you all have to go to church." However, he said we all sound so good, he wanted the rest of the band to hear us. So he calls everybody out to the stage, including stage hands, and started us on "Step By Step"; absolutely incredible! Then he started us on the Doxology (Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow), and half way through, they all walked off. With 3000 plus voices singing in harmony, it was definitely one of those glimpses of what heaven must really be like. As the curtains closed on an era in Wichita, we finished by ourselves.

Kathy says he was finally overcome with the emotion and exhaustion of the whole weekend after graduation Sunday night. He did a pretty good job Saturday night, considering he really thought it might be more emotional. Monday he was gone. We've lost a music ministry genius, but hopefully only temporarily. (Oh yeah, we still have the

tour coming up, OK, I'll be all right.) However, I'm encouraged with the knowledge that somewhere, someone, probably many are going to walk into a class and be changed for the rest of their lives. Thanks Rich, we love you.

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The Ragamuffins

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Rich Mullins (piano, guitar, hammered dulcimer)

Rick Elias (guitars)

Lee Lungren (keyboards, accordion)

Aaron Smith (pounding and thrashing) (that's for all you 77's fans)

Mark Robertson (bass)

Michael Aukofer (percussion)

Jimmy Abegg (guitars)

Beaker (guitars)

Background vocalists (probably only for this concert)

Sherri Howard McCready

Julie Strasser (Beaker's wife)

Nicki Lungren (Lee's wife)

Jared Brown

Brad Martin

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Ragamuffin's Set List

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Ready For The Storm - [WH/SE] (one of very few Rich didn't write)

Where You Are - [WBRv1]

My One Thing - [NPP]

Calling Out Your Name - [WBRv1]

The Color Green - [LLR]

Brother's Keeper - [BK]

Song For Eli - [BK] (about Lee and Nicki's son)

Hope To Carry On - [NPP]

Alrightokuhhuamen - [NPP]

The Just Shall Live - [WBRv2]

Quoting Deuteronomy To The Devil - [BK]

Let Mercy Lead - [BK] (about Beaker and Julie's son)

Hold Me Jesus - [LLR]

Awesome God - [WH/SE]

Sometimes By Step - [WBRv2]

It Is Well With My Soul - (by H.G. Spafford and Phillip P. Bliss)
sung mostly by audience

Peace - [LLR]

Creed - [LLR]

Encore (actually a prayer and praise led by Rich)-

Lord, I Lift Your Name On High - (by Rick Founds)

My Jesus, I Love Thee

(by William R. Featherstone and Adoniram J. Gordon)

Medley/Round-

I'm A Gonna' Sing, Sing, Sing

Swing Low, Sweet Chariot

Saints Go Marchin' In

Amazing Grace - (by John Newton)

Step By Step - [WBRv1]

Doxology (Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow) -
(by Thomas Ken and Louis Bourgeois)

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Rich's albums represented

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[PIS] - Pictures In The Sky

1987 Reunion Records

[WH/SE] - Winds Of Heaven, Stuff Of Earth

1988 Reunion Records

[NPP] - Never Picture Perfect

1989 Reunion Records

[WBRv1] - The World As Best As I Remember It, Vol. 1

1991 Reunion Records

[WBRv2] - The World As Best As I Remember It, Vol. 2

1992 Reunion Records

[LLR] - A Liturgy, A Legacy, & A Ragamuffin Band

1993 Reunion Records

[BK] - Brother's Keeper

1995 Reunion Records (release date July 20, 1995)

(see post about a chance to get a pre-release copy)

Go back to [Rich Mullins Archive Page](#)

Colorado Springs, Colorado Concert Review

 kidbrothers.net/reviews/colorado.html

New Life Church

Todd Hafer

"What's a ragamuffin?" a young girl asked a friend before Rich Mullins & the Ragamuffin Band took the stage in Colorado Springs. I think that girl knows the answer now. Fighting off a flu virus, Mullins and friends put on a three-hour clinic on The Essence of Ragamuffinism. The audience learned three important lessons at this, the 25th stop on the 65-city Brother's Keeper Tour '95.

Ragamuffins aren't obsessed with pomp and fashion. Mullins performed in a lavender T-shirt and blue jeans. No shoes. No socks. He casually sipped a can of Diet Coke between songs - often between verses.

Mullins' attire perfectly reflected the mood of the concert. There were no laser shows, no posturing, no hype. Mullins strolled casually to the stage to introduce opening act Carolyn Arends. Later, he introduced his own set by saying, "Now we're gonna do some music."

Ragamuffins share with their friends. In an age when some artists demand - literally - how much of the spotlight should shine on them, Mullins is an anomaly. He graciously shared the stage with Arends and his other special guest, Ashley Cleveland. Both women did opening sets, came back to showcase more of their considerable talents near the end of the show, then joined Mullins for a three-song encore.

Mullins also took time to acknowledge his crack six-piece band and trio of backing vocalists. He didn't roar, "Everybody in the house - let's give it up for Beaker!" but instead talked about his relationships with Beaker and other members of the team.

Mullins urged the audience to share as well - by supporting The Jesus Way project, an International Bible Society effort to provide a culturally relevant version of the Scriptures to Native Americans. Only two percent of Native

Americans claim to be Christians. Mullins is more than a poster boy for this effort. He's currently living and teaching music on a Navajo reservation.

Appropriately, two Native American dancers, in full ceremonial dress, bopped on stage and through the audience at several points during the evening.

Ragamuffins deliver the goods. Despite its casualness - or perhaps because of it - the concert itself was first-rate. Mullins, who's now closing in on 40, seems more at ease with his audience than ever before. He sang with confidence and power - despite the flu. He deftly mixed songs from his latest release, Brother's Keeper, with classics like "Awesome God," "Creed," "My One Thing," and "Hold Me Jesus."

Mullins invited the audience to participate on many songs, by singing along, shaking their car keys, even dancing. And how this room full of mostly white evangelicals did dance - just like a bunch of mostly white evangelicals. Imagine people standing board-stiff in a strong windstorm, and you have the idea. "You people don't get to dance much, do you?" Mullins noted.

Anyone who's ever attended a Mullins concert knows that hearing the artist's wit and pointed comments is worth the cost of a ticket. And one could make a whole meal out of the sound bites Mullins served on this evening:

After forgetting a few lyrics and flubbing an attempt at whistling, Mullins cracked, "People ask, 'How do you deal with ego problems?' I tell them, 'I do concerts.'"

Waxing social-political, he noted, "I used to be a Democrat." "What are you now?" hollered someone in the audience. Mullins didn't even pause: "Now I'm a dissident!" The crowd's laughter turned to cheers when he added, "Governments don't work, but you, you are the light of the world!"

After finishing a reverent yet soul-filled "It Is Well," Mullins said emphatically, "Now that is what Christian music is all about."

Mullins, Cleveland, and Arends closed the show with three hymns, leaving the stage as the audience completed the Doxology. As they praised the God, "from whom all blessings flow," all in the crowd no doubt realized that those blessings can spring from many sources, including an ailing pack of

ragamuffins.

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Return to Calling Out Your Name

Bellingham Concert Review

↑ kidbrothers.net/reviews/bellingham.html

In his typical humble and unassuming manner, Rich Mullins took the stage on May 18 at Bellingham, Washington. No light show, no trumpet fanfare, no piano rising from the stage. He simply wandered over to the piano stool and sat down, turned towards the microphone, and told us, "Here's a song I played for years before Amy Grant took it and messed it up." After smiling at his friendly jab, he began playing "Praise to the Lord," and an amazing evening with Rich Mullins was underway. It was surprising in that it was identical to the Zion recording he made over fifteen years ago. The piano arrangement was exactly the same, although he has surely played it thousands of times since then. All of the passion and intensity that marked his music back then is still as evident as ever, and his piano playing was flawless in comparison to his early music days while still in college (for the first time, that is! :->).

While still at the piano, Rich moved without speaking into "Here In America" and "Screen Door" before switching over to the guitar to play "I Will Sing" and then "Hope to Carry On." Then Mitch McVicker joined him on stage and they played "Where You Are," "Creed," and "Calling Out Your Name" together. Rich explained the musical that he and Mitch have been working on for the past year. The story is that of St. Francis of Assisi, but instead of a monk in the Middle Ages, "Frank" is a cowboy in nineteenth century America. From talking to Mitch after the concert, their plans are to release the music as an album later this year and then hopefully release the performance of the entire work on video later. He didn't say if they were thinking about taking the actors on the road to perform as a part of a tour, but that would be quite ambitious. Recording of the music was to begin the day after the concert, so the studio work is probably finished. After introducing the musical, he told us about the origins of the interest in St Francis. He and Beaker founded the order for people who wanted that type of lifestyle but were too chicken to join the Catholic Church. Mitch was introduced as the newest member. Rich and Mitch played a selection from the musical, but I didn't catch the name of it, somebody's world. If it is any indication of the quality of the music in the rest of the play, I'm excited to hear the completed work.

After the song, Rich explained that Beaker was no longer touring with him because he was spending his time being a dad. He told us that he thought that being a dad was really cool and that for all the parents in the audience to consider parenthood one of the highest callings possible. He said that a parent bringing up their kids with all the love and support that they need is a blessed thing to witness. And for parents who aren't always caring for their kids the way they should: "Well, we all make mistakes and that's alright, but you should just spend the time loving your kids the way they need to be loved." He said that

Beaker was talking one day about his son, Aidan, and that one night he went in to tuck Aidan in and knelt down for their "talking to God" time. Aidan started out by saying, "Thank you Lord for this day," and then without a word from his dad, Aidan took it from there and did the rest by himself. Rich thought that introducing a spouse or other loved one to know God was a blessed event, but that a son or daughter was even more powerful an experience. After speaking about Aidan for so long, Rich naturally began singing "Let Mercy Lead" and then followed it with "Bound to Come Some Trouble."

At this point, Carolyn Arends surprised everyone by joining Mitch and him on stage. There was no hint that she would be there until she appeared and it took most people a few seconds to realize who she was. But once the audience recognized her, it was clear from the excited murmurs that she was **definitely** a welcome surprise. The three of them led us in the old campfire round. One group sang "I'm Gonna Sing" while another sang "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot" and a third sang "Oh When the Saints." It was always fun around the campfire, but nothing like 1,700 people singing with the direction of several of the best Christian music has to offer! So that was lots of fun. Carolyn followed with two songs of her own, "What I Wouldn't Give" and "Seize the Day." She also told us that she had been involved in a tribute concert for Rich in Nashville and performed for us her rendition of "Jacob and 2 Women." Carolyn was finished with her selections all too quickly, but it was soon forgotten as Rich returned to sing "Step By Step" for us.

Rich told us about his upcoming teaching assignment at the mission school in Arizona for the Navajo tribe. He told us it is the only mission school in the country that is accredited as a real school, and he couldn't understand why more of them weren't up to the same standards as regular schools. He said that many things are done shoddily in the name of Christ, as if putting his name with it gives it extra credence. Rich thought that if we wanted to do a bad job at something, we should use our own name and keep Christ's out of it. This school was something that Rich said he could feel proud about and know that the children were receiving a quality education at the same time as they learned about Christ. He told us that while he was visiting the mission school, a reporter from Chicago was visiting to interview him for an article he was writing. The only problem was that the reporter had already planned for the article to be about how ignorant the Indian children were and how Rich was going to be a superhero to go and educate them. The education that occurred was in the other direction in this case though. Because while they were conducting the interview, one of the little boys at the school came to Rich and showed him a model solar system he was working on. He told him about the distance between the planets and the distance to the stars and how many million miles it was, he told him about the size of the planets and the differences between them, he told him about comets and asteroids and meteors, he told Rich about all of these things that Rich and the reporter didn't even know. When the man from Chicago realized that these were not the ignorant,

uncivilized children he had imagined, he left and returned to his newspaper without even finishing the interview. He didn't realize that Rich simply wanted to share the love of God and the love of music with children at a mission school in Arizona. And Rich said that the hardest part of his student teaching at the public schools was that he couldn't share his faith with them at the same time as he taught them music. He seemed to be very excited about the chance to share music with them and at the same time be able to share his faith.

He then began to speak of the government. He told us that if there is any hope for peace and justice in the world, it won't come from the government. Instead, it will come from the church. After four years of President Clinton, the religious right has worked very hard to come up with a candidate to run against him, and they haven't found one. That, Rich told us, is good news. Rich described the work that he has done with Compassion International overseas, but also emphasized the importance of the work that is needed here in the United States. He encouraged us to support the work that they do with our prayers and our offerings, and we watched a short video describing the work being done by Compassion International in the inner cities and Indian Reservations of America. After the video, there was a short intermission.

After a few minutes, Rich and Mitch played a Bach duet on mandolins. "Brother's Keeper" followed the intermission. Rich then told us a story about Irish Erin sweaters. The Irish were a nation of sailors, but the boats they made weren't very safe, so they often would sink. The women would knit the sweaters while their husbands were at sea, and they would say a special prayer while knitting. The husbands would then wear the finished sweaters while at sea and if the boat sank and they died, the sweaters would eventually wash up on the shore and they could be identified. After he finished, Rich said, "I don't know why I tell audiences that story. It's so charming and tragic." He introduced the song as one that, "I didn't write, but I wish I had," and then sang a very beautiful rendition of "Ready for the Storm" with help from the audience. It gave me a new appreciation for the song.

Rich then told us that he didn't become a Christian because he was impressed with a building he went to or because of a sermon he heard or a hymn he sang or anything like that. He said he became a Christian because of what Jesus did. If Jesus didn't do what we say He did, then the rest is just garbage anyway. He also said that the people in the church supported him and were there for him when he needed it. Then answered his questions when they could and they told him they didn't know when they couldn't. He appreciated the honesty and forthright attitude that they used. He also appreciated that they told him off the times that he sinned and made mistakes.

Finally, he opened it up for requests, "Are there any songs other than Awesome God that

you wanted to hear?" Somebody yelled out "Peace," and he sang it for us. It was followed with "If I Stand," and I was very grateful to hear it, because I *love* the song and he skipped it last concert. He told us that sometimes he is asked where he gets his inspiration for the songs he writes. "Well duh, whatever the song is about!" he told us, "That always kind of hurts my feelings. If you say I don't get this song, that's fine because I'll probably agree with you."

Finally, he started the first few bars on the piano and everyone instantly recognized "Awesome God." With the crowd joyously singing along on the refrain, he sang it as if he really enjoyed it, and not as if it were the millionth time to do it. He said afterwards, "People ask me if I ever get tired of singing that song. Well, I do!" Lots of laughter for that one. He led us all in "It is Well With My Soul" followed by the Doxology. Rich left the stage the same way he came on, by casually wandering off. The thunderous applause was enough to finally get him back to play a couple more, though. He sang "Elijah" for us and then had us do his favorite rain trick, "I always love this one," he told us. The audience was split into four parts and we each did our portion of the rainstorm at his cue by either snapping our fingers together or clapping our hands or slapping our knees. Again, 1,700 people in an auditorium was quite amazing in comparison to my campfire memories. Instead of a little shower, it was a genuine thunderstorm downpour! And Rich was grinning from ear to ear by the end of it because it worked so well.

And with that, the concert was finished. And no encores the second time. I caught him backstage for just a second, but twenty other people had the same idea, and there wasn't much of a chance to talk to him. June 24 is supposed to be the date for the release of the greatest hits album. So, until the next time that Rich comes this direction to perform, there will be memories and a few photographs. And eight albums worth of music to listen to!

[Return to Calling Out Your Name](#)

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Rich in Alabama Sept 14

↑ kidbrothers.net/rmml/rmml83.html

Date: 18 September 1996

To: RichMailList

Subject: [RichMailList 83]: Rich in Alabama Sept 14

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Hi Rich Fans,

Here's a great review of Rich's appearance in Alabama last Saturday. This must be where Rich was returning home from when Bob ran into him Sunday (flying back home - see [previous post](#)). Thanks a bunch, Martia, for sharing about seeing Rich, and also a little about you.

From: Martia Wilson

Date: Mon, 16 Sep 1996 20:09:02

Subject: Rich in Alabama Sept 14

Hi Daniel,

What a serendipity! I have to go back to central AL every other week to care for my ailing Mother, and last Friday I just "happened" to pick up a Friday Birmingham News and in the religion section, here was an ad for a youth leaders' night out event, featuring our beloved Rich Mullins on Saturday the 14th!

Since I work with the youth here on the Choctaw reservation, I was qualified to attend this FREE concert, so I went. The venue was a nice

church in a
little tiny town called Curry, near the slightly larger city of
Jaspar, and
it took fortynine forevers to get there, but OF COURSE it was
worth it!

It was just Rich and Mitch McVicker (and Gay, of course--who looks
like she's
lost some weight and cut her hair), plus there was a youth
minister/speaker
named Duffy Robbins.

The show started 18 minutes late, and if you can believe it, Rich
actually
let someone introduce him! And another amazing thing: he wore
shoes for the
entire show!

Rich looked real good and he seemed to be rested. He wore a white
western
shirt and blue jean shorts. And--tell the girls not to cry--he's
recently
cut his hair back into the style that he was photographed on the
cover of
"B's Kpr". I had not really noticed Mitch from the BK tour last
year in the
backup choir, so I was struck by how much he resembled Beaker
(only with more
hair :). He seems to be a very gentle and contemplative man.
Rich commented
that he and Beaker both "realized that this guy was more like St.
Francis
than anyone we knew."

He opened the show with "Sing Your Praise to the Lord", then Duffy
came up
and sang a "jive song" he had written to the tune of "Jailhouse
Rock". Rich
backed him on the piano and did a rollicking good job--sorta bump
and grind.

Mr. Mullins is quite capable of stretching out of his style very easily and quite well.

At that point (yes, after only one song) Duffy took over and gave his talk, which was quite funny and entertaining--but too long. He spoke for 53 minutes and maybe I'm the only one in the house that thought so, but I kept looking over at Rich and wishing I was hearing him!

Finally Rich took back over and they played from 8:10 til 10:15! This concert was so very intimate, like we were over their trailer and they were just singin' for friends...only that would have been a trick, since Rich commented their trailer was "about as big as that baptistry up there".

Sorry I am not as thorough a reporter as some of the posts I've seen in the mail archives you keep--I neglected to write the set lists down. Only I can tell you this--Mitch did a couple of tunes from the musical they finished (the title will be "Canticle of the Plains"). One song was called "There You Are", and it was interesting to me in that it was very freeform melodically, and the only rhymes are in the chorus.

The two guys also played the JS Bach duet on the mandolin and mandola that someone remarked about in an earlier post. One other thing that I noticed was that Rich has really been working on his guitar playing; he's using chord

voicings higher up the neck and doing some really beautiful finger picking.

He also spoke about his involvement with Compassion USA, and in his typical lowkey way invited people to investigate becoming involved with that worthwhile ministry. He mentioned a need on the Navajo rez--two women who are doing a puppet ministry for kids have had a major breakdown of the vehicle that they minster and live out of. He asked for contributions to be directed to Gay, so if anyone reading this post wants to get involved in that need, perhaps you can supply them Gay's address or email address...

After the show, and incidentally there was less than one hundred people there--there was a reception and fellowship time in the church's family life center. As I had a two hour drive ahead of me, I chose not to stay.

Besides, in some ways it seems to me that Rich and I lead parallel lives, I didn't want to tell him that I am doing the same thing he is doing--teaching music as a missionary on an Indian reservation. I guess that might be hard to understand, but I am shy, and didn't want to risk a possible negative reaction from him (I am aware that women say all kinds of wild and crazy things to him to try to get his interest).

However, an acquaintance of mine who did stay to talk to him said that he told her he had not started teaching yet, and that currently he is still

going on the road two weekends a month, so there is still hope that he has not fully "retired" yet! I don't know if he plans to record "Canticle" yet, but from the things he said about it on the stage, I believe it would have to be filmed!

One remark in closing---the first thing I ever learned about Rich Mullins, before I even heard his music (I've only been a fan of his since Fall of 1991) was that he wasn't into this CCM industry for the money. The person who told me this was at that time the VP of a concert promotion company in Bham, and he compared Rich with several BIG names (at this time Rich wasn't that popular) in the Industry, and it was clear by the difference in asking prices were different people's treasures/hearts were. But to tell the truth, I sorta blow off what that guy said, and put it down to hyperbole. But seeing the small size of the church and the handful turnout, I now know for myself that Rich's heart really is like what people have been saying about him. It is a very rare phenomenon in Christian music when an artist will not think himself above coming to play for a few dozen folks.

Maybe I'll never get up the nerve (or get the chance again--but every time I see Rich I think it'll be the last time) to speak to Mr. Mullins, but the quality of his soul and his personal integrity were never so obvious as they were last Saturday, September 14 in Curry AL, and I will always

respect him
as one of the true ministers in CCM.

Take good care of you and your loved ones,
Martia Wilson
Tawodi2@aol.com

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Rich Mullins and The Ragamuffin Band Century II, Wichita, KS Friday 7:30pm, January 31st, 1997

↑ kidbrothers.net/rmml/rmml109.html

Date: 10 February 1997

To: RichMailList

Subject: [RichMailList 109]: Wichita, KS 1/31 review

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with guests **This Train**

Rick Elias and The Wondermuffins

and **Jimmy A**

review by

[Danl Blackwood](#)

**This concert was sponsored by
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| [Review](#) | [Set List and Credits](#) | [Other Pictures](#) |

Click on all pictures to see a larger one.

Let there be no mistake about it, I like Rich's music, but I have made up my mind. I enjoy Rich's spoken ministry more. Every time I see Rich in concert, I am thoroughly inspired with a renewed perspective of life as a child of God, and this concert was certainly no exception.

The evening began with several members of the [Rich Mullins Mailing List](#) meeting at **Quizno's Classic Subs** in downtown Wichita near **Century II** for dinner and a chat. Many of those in attendance had never met before, other than in cyberspace. After some great sandwiches, we all walked over to the **Century II Concert Hall** for the first of two nights in Wichita for Rich.

The Concert Hall is the same room where Rich did his farewell concert over a year and half ago (see [\[RichMailList 16\]](#)). The stage was setup much the same. **Gay Quisenberry**, Rich's manager, kicked the show off at 7:30pm, and after a few announcements, brought out Rich and the Ragamuffins. They all gathered around a couple microphones and opened with a neat arrangement of "I Will Sing", and then immediately into "Sing Your Praise To The Lord."

Rich did most of the standard crowd pleasers right up front, including "Awesome God", and my personal favorite "If I Stand" (which also just happened to be the favorite on this mailing list last May, see [\[RichMailList 64\]](#)). Ragamuffin members Jimmy A, Rick Elias (also with the **Wondermuffins**), Mark Robertson (also with **This Train**), and Mitch McVicker (also as **St Frank** in "Canticle Of The Plains") all had their chance to be featured.

During the concert almost after every song, Rich would turn to Rick or Aaron and mouth "What's next?" It was a bit humorous, yet not so obvious that everyone noticed. At one point, when Rich was told the next song, he responded out loud, "Oh good, I like that one!" He then told us that he really liked all his songs - after all, it seemed silly that anyone would write a song if you're not going to like it. Even though Rich was sometimes not sure what was next, everything went very smoothly, considering also how many different instruments were used, and the variety of performers.

I should take this opportunity to apologize to those that drove many miles to see this concert with the understanding there was going to be more of the "Canticle Of The Plains". Though I indicated (as I had been led to believe) that there might be more of the musical, there ended up only being two songs. I can only assume that, because the Ragamuffins don't play together regularly (with all their individual projects), they didn't have enough time to prepare for more than the two songs. Many of us got to hear pretty much the whole musical and a narrative interview with Rich and Mitch the following Sunday in a world premier broadcast on [KTLI Light 99 FM](#). Since [Light 99 broadcasts 24 hours a day on the World Wide Web](#) as a [RealAudio](#) broadcast, it gave a whole new validity to the overused phrase "world premier". For those that wanted more at the concert, and also for those who missed the world premier, I will be posting the transcript of the broadcast. (See [\[RichMailList 113\]](#): [Canticle Premier Transcript](#)) I've heard both "Canticle" songs in previous concerts, but it was the first time I got to hear them with the band (I just love Aaron Smith's drumming). "Heaven Is Waiting" is rapidly becoming one of my favorites.

During the first set the stage crew, which consisted partially of the members of **This Train**, were kept very busy moving different percussion instruments on and off the stage.

Beginning with "John", an instrumental song Rich named for his dad, there were about four songs in a row that used a wide variety and combination of instruments including two hammer dulcimers, a lap dulcimer, upright electric bass, mandolins, wood blocks, vibes, and even one of those big marching band bass drums. The last of those four was "Why Do The Nations Rage," and Rich shared he had written it originally for **Ronald Reagan**. Since he wasn't president anymore, he wanted to dedicate it to our current president ... and her husband. That got a big laugh from the crowd; big enough that I'm sure some missed his next jab, which was, "I have tuned my guitar for the benefit of the village." Some songs had lots of instrumentation, some were just Rich on piano, and one neat arrangement was Rick Elias singing Rich's "The Breaks" with just Rick on acoustic guitar, Mark on upright bass, and Rich, Mitch, and Jimmy on background vocals. It seems that every concert there is at least one song where Rich forgets the words. This time it was "Calling Out Your Name", and he got lost on the second half of the first verse that refers to Kansas. However, later in the song he worked in the [Keeper Of The Plains](#), a 44-foot tall statue at the confluence of the Big and Little Arkansas Rivers in downtown Wichita. While he was trying to recover, he just sang, "I've forgotten the words, and I don't really care." Funny stuff.

Next were two songs from the "Canticle Of The Plains", and as mentioned we'll have a complete transcript online of Rich and Mitch telling us that story in detail. (See [\[RichMailList 113\]: Canticle Premier Transcript](#)) I did want to share one thing that Rich mentioned this evening that I could really relate to. He was describing "Heaven Is Waiting" as a song that **Frank** does when he's having one of those moments of commitment to Jesus like you used to have every summer at youth camp. Then you got a little bit older and you started doing it almost monthly. "I'm forty. I'm doing it every day already, and I'm kinda going, there's not enough hours in the day by the time I'm 80, for me to do it all the time."

After the break, it was time for **This Train**. Mark Robertson and his kooky sense of humor was featured with his four piece band. They rocked the house with three songs from their "You're Soaking In It" album. To introduce "Monster Truck", Mark explained that he has a real problem with sappy love songs, and doesn't like writing them. However he had met the girl of his dreams ("What was her name again?"), and he decided for her, he would write a love song, but that he had to do it in a way that he could still feel proud about it. "I don't know for sure that the song is the reason she said no." The song was their first big hit, and if you don't have the album, you need to get it. Good tunes and good fun.

One of my favorites during the concert was "Screen Door" with it's cup passing/percussion routine, but the moment that received possibly the biggest reaction from crowd was up next. Rich walked out after **This Train**, and introduced Rick Elias and the

Wondermuffins, and as the Ragamuffins all walked out, they were magically transformed as they all donned shiny gold dinner jackets over black turtlenecks. Rick did a couple really 60's sounding songs from the "That Thing You Do" soundtrack. I haven't seen it yet, but my girls loved that movie, and went around for days singing the title track (one of few Rick didn't co-write).

As I'd said at the beginning, the highlight of the concert for me was listening to Rich just tell his stories and share his philosophy of life - mostly stories of growing up. Except for frequent bursts of laughter at Rich's unique sense of humor, the whole audience was completely silent as we sat and listened to the spontaneous wisdom that also brings us the lyrics from the heart of God. I could go on and on, but I'll just say that you must see Rich live to appreciate it.

When Rich came out for what has become his standard prayer and praise encore, he announced that [Compassion](#) set a record at this concert. They had given every single child sponsorship packet out for the first time ever. The second evening of the concert they tied that record. I understand the second evening was the same set, not as many in attendance, but there was a video crew taking footage for an unknown project.

During the encore, the sound of thousands of voices lifted in praise (especially on "When Peace, Like A River") was certainly a glimpse of heaven. Many shared the same sentiment, and it is a moment of worship that in my experience is unique to a Rich Mullins concert. So even though there are some of you reading this that just haven't had the chance to see Rich live in concert, it is definitely something that must be experienced this side of the cross. Maybe someday, Rich will do a live concert video, but in the meantime, I hope this review has given you a glimpse of Rich Mullins.

[Click here for the set list and credits](#)

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[RichMailList 126]: More reviews - Langhorne/Denton

↑ kidbrothers.net/rmml/rmml126.html

Date: 07 April 1997

To: RichMailList

Subject: [RichMailList 126]: More reviews - Langhorne/Denton

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- [Langhorne, PA 03/21 review](#)
- [Denton, TX 03/23 review](#)

***** Yet another Langhorne, PA 03/21 review *****

From: [DAWN L HUTH](#)

Date: Tue, 25 Mar 1997 11:06:58

Subject: Rich in Philly

Hi Danl,

Just thought I'd give you my take on Rich at the Phil. College of the Bible. I went with two friends, both of who are new to Rich. We drove up from north of Baltimore and made it in record time ("Just how fast does this car go, Lowell?") We got there at 5:30 and had not eaten. I had to pick up my tickets which were being held at the bookstore and passed a cafeteria on the way in. So rather than fight the traffic that was pouring out, we had dinner in the cafeteria. Very nice! The food was very good and cheap! Rich was making his way in as I left the bookstore. He had a small gathering behind him, so I didn't stop.

Before the concert it was announced that you could take pictures, but use no flash. Right near the beginning someone did and it looked like some type of security guy walked a woman out with her camera in his hand. I guess they weren't kidding! They started off with Hallelu-hallelu...which he required audience participation, then onto "I'm gonna sing, sing, sing." The song list was:

I Will Sing Where You Are Last Time I Saw Charlie (which he said his record company wouldn't accept)

I think it was then that Mitch's guitar string broke and had to go in

the hall to get a new one, so Rich did a kind of "request time." He said that they were reading Lamentations because it's Lent and you're supposed to be sad. He went on to do: Screen Door Hold Me Jesus If I Stand Other Side of the World. Next was Let Mercy Lead, explaining that Beaker wanted a song for his son, but out the the bunch they did, none were good enough. He then did the story of the Irish sweaters (but saved the best for later.) They did: Ready for the Storm Brother's Keeper. Rich then hammered out Sing Your Praise to the Lord - which just had me mesmerized watching him play the piano. Then there was a song something about "If You're Ever in New Mexico." The two of them played a Bach and Schumann piece on the mandolins as a duet. Rich mentioned that they weren't really in tune, but why spoil a perfect record. Rich left and Mitch did a few pieces, the first which he had the wrong keyed harmonica, but did his best to fake it. The names are my guesses: I Don't Know Much Hope to Hang My Hat On (which was new and never before done) and I Can't Get My Broken Heart to Mend.

Rich came back and they did: Calling Out Your Name Creed Growing Young John's Song (which he wrote for his father) 78 Eatonwood Green First Family (or Never Picture Perfect) Elijah Awesome God. At this point he started talking about the love and grace of God, and brought up the Irish sweater again...just when he said (and this is severely paraphrased) that when we've done all we can here and our bodies wash up on the shore of heaven, Christ will see our sweaters and know by the love stitched in them that He knit those sweaters and we are His and takes us home. By this point the tears were streaming out of my eyes. It didn't help when he started into "Sometimes By Step." He walked off and after some calling, he came back on. He sat at the piano and did my two very favorite hymns, My Jesus I Love Thee and When Peace Like a River. He told the people to start singing a hymn and he would join in. We did All the Way My Savior Leads Me Old Rugged Cross How Great Thou Art Great is Thy Faithfulness. He left on the Doxology. What a high! To hear all of those voices singing these beautiful hymns. I think it must have touched him as well, because he would lean away from the mic and just listen.

A couple of quips: I know the Bible has to be inspired because no man could have written a book that crazy. And: Talking about how he and his great-grandmother loved the story of David when he cut Goliath's head off, he said: David didn't mean to cut Goliath's head off (long pause) What he meant to do was take sandwiches to his brothers. (Well, I thought it was cute.) The whole evening Rich was

in a very up mood. He did make a couple of cracks about charismatics. He talked of his family a lot. If folks came away with anything it should have been "Read Your Bible!" He really emphasized that several times. He said about being single that people always ask him isn't it lonely. He says he knows married people who are lonely and he couldn't imagine being lonely in a marriage and having a lonely wife to worry about as well!

We couldn't stay since we had a 1 1/2 hour trip home and it didn't end until around 11pm. I would do it all over again. I was not able to get reserved tickets (or three in one place) but we were 2 rows behind the reserved and just left of center (and that was so I could watch him play the piano) - so we saved \$5 a seat and had the perfect view. I believe I heard him comment to Mitch about a guitar and when he gets a real job, he's gonna get one. Well, that's it...if not too much. I jotted most stuff down, but I don't think I will soon forget.

In Him,
dawn
Ephesians 1:2-6

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***** Another Denton, TX 03/23 review *****

Date: Fri, 28 Mar 1997 14:19:10
From: [Pam Luster](#)
Subject: Rich's inspiring appearance in Denton, Texas

Danl,

I've been to several RM concerts, but none has been quite this enjoyable. My reluctant brother accompanied me to the show, and came away a fan. I explained to him that I'd attended some of his "strange" concerts in the past, and he should reciprocate and see this "strange man" with me. As I said, he was pleasantly surprised, and I think I'll have a "date" for the next "Rich Mullins Farewell Tour".

The concert's setting was perfect, and I loved the intimate feel of Rich and Mitch going it alone. I'd pick this acoustic version over a

full-band any day! Do you know if Mitch has anything recorded? His songs were great, and I'd like to hear more from him.

The one thing that surprised me was Rich's attire. Very, very spiffy! I don't think I've ever seen him fully-clothed, and have always been able to get a peek at his knees during earlier appearances. Again, the concert was wonderful, and I know God blessed us all that night.

Thanks for the ear!

Pam Luster
Fort Worth, Texas

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[RichMailList 130]: Wheaton, IL 04/18 reviews

↑ kidbrothers.net/rmml/rmml130.html

Date: 23 April 1997

To: RichMailList

Subject: [RichMailList 130]: Wheaton, IL 04/18 reviews

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Hi Rich Fans,

As you read these reviews, it's apparent that the "Canticle of the Plains" CD is now for sale at the concerts. For those overseas that have inquired, I'm still trying to get some info on how to order one. I will post as soon as I get it.

A couple other items of interest - I'm still waiting for tour info from William Morris, and there are now over 500 subscribed to the Rich Mullins Mailing List.

-- *Danl*

***** Gina Blanchette's Wheaton review *****

From: [Gina Blanchette](#)

Date: Mon, 21 Apr 1997 13:24:53

Subject: April 18 concert

Danl -

Sending a review of Rich's concert and the Canticle of the Plains premiere at Wheaton College, Wheaton, IL on Friday, April 18, 1997. And to you, Danl, prayers and thanks for the work you do.

I had a seat directly in front of Rich and in the second row. Great seat for a concert. He and Mitch did "I Will Sing" and "Carry On." Rich all by himself sounded better than a whole orchestra and backup singers on "Sing Your Praise to the Lord." Rich and Mitch did a number with mandolin and guitar. Mitch did the lemonade song and the

New Mexico song and said Rich was being real nice to let him do two songs. We did the three part round mentioned in other reviews.

Rich

and Mitch were waiting for Beaker to show up and he finally did with Aidan. Rich and Beaker played "Let Mercy Lead" and Aidan stayed by Beaker until he decided to start walking around the stage and Mitch had to go get him. Aidan is adorable. Julie and the baby were there, too, but off-stage. It was neat to see them. Mitch is a very

good songwriter/musician/singer with a fine voice and, as has already

been mentioned a very sweet, humble disposition.

It was a good concert, but only lasted about 45 minutes! And I had such a good seat!! They were really just the opening act for the premiere

of the play which was being put on by the Wheaton College students.

Rich

said it was hard opening for himself and he was right. Things were a little

disjointed. Mitch even had to tell a joke while they were waiting for Beaker. Rich had to go offstage and find a mandolin while Mitch was telling the joke. In fact, when Rich initially walked on stage he apologized for his appearance. His hair was still wet and he hadn't shaved. He said he had a choice of being full or being pretty

and he chose being full. He joked that he liked being here, but didn't care much for the weather. He said he wasn't our fault though, unless there was some unconfessed sin in the camp. I thought

it was funny, but the crowd wasn't terribly receptive. I think I grinned through the whole concert. Rich and Mitch were amiable and weren't rattled about the arrangements. Rich's jokes weren't rude and he made several astute comments throughout the concert. Even with a shortened concert Rich managed to let us know that he was there to entertain and not tell us how to live. He said find a church and read the Bible for that. It was a mixed crowd, I think, with some there for the concert and some there 'cause they knew someone in the play.

When the play started I remembered that second row is not good play

seats, so I shouldn't even be allowed to review the play. I liked it; the messages in it (and there are many), the music, the story line. It was, however, the kind of play that would take many performance to get the characters down well, especially St. Frank. It's hard to play a saint. The students did an admirable job, God love them, but it didn't do full justice to the writing and the music. And it was a long play, about 2 1/2 hours . . . undoubtedly a whole lot of work for the students to get this play ready!

For Rich Mullins fans it was a full night. After the play Rich and Mitch played "Awesome God", "Creed" (Just Rich and Mitch sounded really fine on this punched-up version). In honor of Wheaton teaching "theology and stuff" Rich played "Jesus Loves Me" on hammer dulcimer because that's what the Swiss theologian Karl Barth once stated as the sum total of theology - "Jesus loves me, this I know 'cause the Bible tells me so." And he closed with "Sometimes By Step" and all the cast members came out to sing with him. They walked off stage and there was applause, but the houselights were turned on and there was no encore.

Personally, I wanted more concert although it was already 11:30. Rich had seemed amenable to continuing as he had earlier stated that this is about the time he usually gets warmed up. It's almost as if I need to go to a Rich Mullins concert now 'cause this one was too short. Anyone want to send me comp tickets to the Peoria concert?? I think it's May 3. I'm serious! But I did get to hear the play, get the pre-release of Canticle of the Plains (and it is way fine!) see and hear Mitch, see Beaker and the family, and enjoy what there was of the concert.

I think it was difficult for Rich and Mitch to start a concert, quit, then finish up a couple hours later. The crowd never seemed to get warmed up as a whole and that has gotta be hard on the performers. But what I really want to know is what were Rich, Mitch and Beaker doing during the play??

Gina Blanchette

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***** Chris Smith's Wheaton review *****

From: [Chris Smith](#)

Date: Tue, 22 Apr 1997 04:45:59 (EDT)

Subject: Rich Mullins' Concert/Canticle of the Plains: Wheaton College

Dear Danl,

I just recently attended the Rich Mullins premier The Canticle of the Plains at Wheaton College. Here is my review:

Rich opened and closed the evening with concert. Some of his most popular songs were played including: Awesome God, Creed, Let Mercy Lead, Step by Step.

Sandwiched in between the concert was The Canticle of the Plains a musical based on the life of St. Francis of Assisi performed by students from Wheaton College.

Over all it was an interesting evening. Rich was excellent as usual, I could listen to him play for hours. However, The Canticle of the Plains was very difficult to follow. The sound system was poor making it even more difficult to understand. I had read once before that Rich could always tell a new songwriter because everything the songwriter believed would be included in one song. As a new playwright, I feel that Rich has done the same thing.

I do not want to be critical because I have so much respect for Rich as a songwriter. I am confident that as time goes on, Rich will become as brilliant at writing plays as he is at writing music.

Worthy of note: My sister purchased the pre-released CD of Canticle of the Plains and we have been listening to it ever since. The music is wonderful and I would recommend it to everyone.

Chris Smith
Chicago, IL

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***** Leta Blank's Wheaton review *****

Subject: Canticle of the Plains
Date: Thu, 24 Apr 1997 22:33:20
From: [Leta Blank](#)

The Canticle of the Plains musical at Wheaton College was a very beautiful play. It was everything a play should be, full of romance, humor, history, depth, and much more. I think it portrayed St. Francis' life very well into the 19th century at a level that we could grasp. It portrays how God touches one person's life and how he touches others through that one person.

Frank giving up his wealthy life because he experienced God in a very real way in the prairie on the way home from the war. He then spends much time alone with God, wandering around, letting God love him and teaching him how to love. Then he meets Buzz's mom and she sees that special love of God in him and knows that Buzz is to be his buddy. Frank and Buzz go off on a cattle drive together and go through

Kansas

where Frank was from. They visit with two of his childhood friends, Clare and Ivory. Ivory is a piano player in a saloon. Clare sees God

in Frank, but Ivory is skeptical, but after talking with Frank, he realizes he too wants to be free and experience God. Clare likes Frank

but realizes she can't be with him right now because they really need

God first. Ivory continues on with Frank and Buzz and people are converted wherever they go. Clare goes to Texas and does some nursing

and growing closer to God. Frank and the others meet up with a guy named

Lefty, (a gold miner) who comes to know God through Frank, Buzz, and Ivory. They decide to search for Dineh Bekeya, a place Frank and Ivory

dreamed up when they were kids, but Lefty says he knows that place and

it's real. They get a message that Clare is going to meet them and they

send word for her to come to Dineh Bekeya. Ivory says he wishes he had

a girl meeting him there and Lefty says there is a beautiful Indian princess there. Lefty gives his gold to Ivory for a dowry for the princess. They then join together with a band of Indians that have soldiers after them. Ivory uses his gold to buy food, blankets, and guns. But they don't need the guns because God causes the enemy to destroy themselves. Turns out the beautiful Indian princess was with

the band of Indians and is so touched by Ivory's generosity and while

talking to him they fall in love. They all go on to Dineh Bekeya and

live happily ever after.

Throughout the play are songs that are so beautiful and touching and really help to deliver the story line. I thought the performers did an

excellent job of portraying all that Rich, Mitch, and Beaker meant it to

be. There were also other messages in the play about the four creatures that surround the throne of God, how they represent the four gospels, and how they represented four of the characters. I could also see the three personalities that created this play, Rich, Mitch, and Beaker in different parts and in different characters throughout the play. I don't know if that was intentional or not but they did shine through.

Leta

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Kissimme, Florida Concert Review

↑ kidbrothers.net/reviews/kissimmee.html

Matt Ritzenthaler

The concert was presented by Florida Christian College, and many of the students provided security as the doors were opened at 6:00 with the concert starting at 7:30. Personally, I am glad that the doors were opened that early as it allowed time to browse the product table. I was able to pick up the "Canticle Of The Plains" CD! Since there was an hour and a half until showtime, we were able to hear Rich and Mitch tune up although it was through the locked lobby doors :(. The doors to the auditorium were opened at 7:00, and we rushed to the front to get a close seat but the first five rows were reserved for the college students and staff.

Rich quietly walked on stage unnoticed by much of the crowd, but when they realized it, cheers and applause broke forth. Mitch McVicker then stepped out from behind the screen that would be used during the intermission to show footage of Compassion International's work with Native Americans. The stage itself consisted of only a few lights (mostly for visibility and not for effect) which only helped to backlight Rich and Mitch, since they kept the auditorium lights on during the entire concert.

Rich was quick to point out that this was #11 in a series of farewell tours. He also commented that instead of considering this a concert, that we were to consider it a class on the history of CCM. At which point he broke the crowd into three groups (A,B, and C). The "A" group was that would sing in Hebrew - "Hallelu, Hallelu" to which he quipped that if we were to sing in actual Hebrew emphasizing the "H" we should be careful not to spit on the people in front of us. The "B" group would sing Davidic - "Jah!" with much power in our voices. The "C" group would resemble the contemporary worshipers, most likely Baptists - "Praise Ye The Lord!". Each group was asked to stand up to sing their part and then sit back down, and Rich had each group sing all 3 parts by the time it was finished. What a crowd opener!

Next, he had the groups sing "I'm gonna sing, I'm gonna shout" which went right into "Sweet Chariot" and "Saints Go Marching In".

After that, he sat down next to Mitch to start into the rest of the night's song line-up, which went something like this...

I Will Sing - Hope To Carry On

Where You Are

Ready For The Storm (with story about Irish sailors, and how he first heard the song by Dougie McClain in Cincinnati, Ohio)

THE BABY JOKE - Let Mercy Lead

Mitch left the stage, and Rich walked over to the grand piano sitting on the left side of the stage. Within seconds of reaching the piano he had the introduction to his next song started, and then he sat down to play (in an awkward position - sitting sideways with his legs crossed)

Sing Your Praise To The Lord

Screen Door

We Are Not As Strong As We Think We Are

Then he got up from the piano and walked over to center stage. Where he was rejoined by Mitch, as they picked up mandolins and played together a rendition of Bach (which he claimed might not come off well, but sounded amazing since several parts were in unison). Upon finishing, Rich stood up and left the stage to Mitch McVicker, who played three songs which I don't know the titles to, but will include lyrics...

"...north and south...east and west...His Love..."

"...sitting up in Heaven in an easy chair drinking lemonade..."

He commented how all of his songs seem to come back to one theme and how "Jesus scares the Hell out of us" which was very profound...

"...time will tell...love will..."

Then Rich re-appeared to sing a few songs and to have the audience make the auditorium rain (I won't give this away, its something that has to be experienced...my wife loved it!) before taking a short break...

Brother's Keeper

new song "...you're always here..."

RAIN - BREAK

After the break, an instrument I had been waiting for him to pick up, the

hammered dulcimer was used to do a few instrumentals...

*John
78 Eatonwood Green
Complete intro to "C.O.Y.N."*

After that short set, they started singing more of those beloved songs

*Calling Out Your Name
Creed
Elijah
Awesome God*

At this point Mitch left the stage, and Rich asked us if we knew this...

*Sometimes By Step
Step By Step*

While the crowd sang the last chorus a capella, Rich slipped away from the stage as unnoticed as he came in. When the goose bumps subsided we started cheering for that much desired encore...

*It Is Well With My Soul
I'm Gonna Sing, I'm Gonna Shout
Sweet Chariot
Saints Go Marching In
Doxology*

After the concert, both Rich and Mitch were in the lobby to meet their audience to sign autographs and take pictures. I was told that Mitch would be recording an album for distribution next year. I also mentioned the interview on KTLI and the mailing list. Rich was just amazed at the advances in computers, especially at the computer generated t-shirt designs that my wife and I were wearing (which my wife noticed his surprised reaction to, and commented on later). He signed my shirt and CD's "be God's, Rich". A great ending to a spectacular evening with an awesome man of God.

Review by [Matt Ritzenthaler](#)

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Stone Mountain, Georgia Concert Review

↑ kidbrothers.net/reviews/stonemtn.html

Steve Busey

Saturday June 28th was a wonderful Spirit filled evening in Stone Mountain, GA. Must have been a thousand people in a beautiful new church (which could probably have held 1500 comfortably). The show started on time with Rich coming out to introduce Mitch McVicker, who did 3 or 4 of his own songs, about 20 minutes worth. Mitch pointed out that most of his songs turned out to be about love. ("I guess I'm in a songwriting rut... ;^}") Keep your eyes open for this guy's CD when it comes out next year.

Then as the sunset beamed through the large arched windows, Rich and the band came in (7 musicians altogether, including Rich and Mitch) and began an extended instrumental jam, with Rich on the dulcimer, which went right into Awesome God. Open your show with your biggest song and a standing ovation? What do you do for an encore?? Over three hours later, we found out... ;^}

As you can imagine, the crowd spent at least half the show on their feet clapping and singing along (there were spots where the band would just stop and let the crowd sing for a minute before joining back in). In fact, at the midway break, he had the audience split in two, one side singing a line, the other side echoing it. He walked off the stage with the audience left singing. We'd probably still be there singing if the emcee hadn't come out and plugged the shirts, CDs and Compassion packets in the lobby. Prior to the break, Rich gave an impassioned talk about Compassion USA (which focuses on Native American Indian and inner city urban programs). You could have heard a pin drop as he related some of his first hand accounts and stories of Compassion involvement. After the break, he came out and reported that last year, the Atlanta concert had the worst showing for Compassion sponsorships, this time after the break, they were tied for the best showing. And there were more people signing up after the show when I picked up mine.

As for music, in addition to Mitch, the band included a three man "power

trio" called *This Train*. They did 4 songs by themselves in the first set. A very high energy rock trio: guitar, drums and standup bass. Very funny guys. ("You may think we're weird, but we're gonna spend eternity together, so you may as well start liking us now!") Tunes with lines like "I'll love you whether you like it or not" or their love song, "Monstertruck", and a tune inspired by Mr. Rogers ("..or can I call you Fred?"). At one point they talked about supporting "artists who make records for a living, or in our case, artists who make records." Then they did one of their favorite old spirituals, "...you may not recognize it at first...", which was "I Saw The Light". The crowd was on their feet for all four numbers. Their CD is titled "You're Soaking In It".

After the midway break, Rich came out and did a new unaccompanied vocal song about Jesus as a homeless man. After that got everyone back in their seats, he let Mitch do a couple more numbers, then they did some songs from Rich's new play "Canticle of the Plains" about St Frank of Wichita in the 1800's, based on St Francis of Assisi. The rest of the show was all vintage RM songs, with musicians coming and going with each song. (It seemed like the musician-instrument arrangement changed with each song.) When they did "Screen Door" (an a capella number with kind of a hambone rhythm), they brought a long table up on stage, and the five singers stood shoulder to shoulder. Rich started with a stack of five plastics cups in front of him. They then went into a choreographed routine of hand clapping, table slapping and cup flipping until all the cups were at the other side of the table, all while singing the song. Very impressive! (That's the only picture I took all night, hope it comes out)

Beaker showed up (apparently lives in Atlanta?) and did "Let Mercy Lead" with Rich, a song Rich apparently wrote for Beaker's son, who was also there. Rich gave another "speech" near the end of the second half, about a lot of things, state of CCM, of Christians in general ("it's not enough to be 'blessed' anymore, you have to be 'anointed'. Being a Christian is becoming wetter and wetter..."), government "aid", poked fun at some denominations and himself ("I once thought about joining a monastery, but I'm too chicken to be a Catholic, much less a Franciscan"). In the first half of the show, Rich introduced "Ready For The Storm" with the Irish sailor story. He finished the second half "speech" with the end of the sailor story, and led right into "Creed".

The big closing number was a medley with the crowd singing three parts,

from "I'm Gonna Sing, I'm Gonna Shout", "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot" and "Saints Go Marching In". Then Rich said he had one more song, and started "God be with you 'til we meet again..." and as the crowd finished the benediction, Rich and the band disappeared from the stage, once again avoiding a major ovation. All told almost 3 and a half hours, which, to borrow an expression from a friend, "blessed our socks off"... (Rich's too, apparently, as he spent most of the evening barefooted!) Catch him if you can.

Review by [Steve Busey](#)

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[RichMailList 151]: Naperville, IL 08/09 review

↑ kidbrothers.net/rmml/rmml151.html

Date: 14 August 1997

To: RichMailList

Subject: [RichMailList 151]: Naperville, IL 08/09 review

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From: [Gina Blanchette](#)

Organization: Olivet Nazarene University

Date: Mon, 11 Aug 1997 13:23:47

Subject: Prayer request for Rich

Danl - God's blessings to you! I know you always ask us to pray for

Rich's ministry, and quite rightly! I saw Rich & Mitch & This Train

last Saturday, Aug. 9 in Naperville, IL.

Several songs into the set Rich said he wanted to do new songs for us

since we can always listen to the old ones on CD. After he and the band had done several more old numbers he stopped, laughed, and told

us he knew he just told us he was going to do new songs, but in all honesty they were all exhausted. Rich cautioned us that he might start weeping during the show because the more tired he gets the more

prone he becomes to weeping. Then he said he was sick, too. His stomach lining is coming out. He said he's "cannibalizing himself" and has pain off and on from stomach cramps.

After that the concert went well all things considered. They didn't

do any new songs. Rich played the keyboard, guitar, dulcimers, and xylophone all very well. He forgot more lyrics than usual. Mitch

was even quieter than his usual quiet self. This Train was great. Mark Robertson said they were euphoric because they had been home the day before and that was the first time they were home since April.

The band cracked up during While the Nations Rage and Rich had them all start over because the cello player messed up somewhere during the intro. The cello player pretended to be offended and left.

The percussionist went to fill in. The cello player came back, Rich put

down the guitar, went back to the keyboard, the band re-finished the

song before that, If I Stand, then Rich went back to the guitar, slammed Republicans this time because he slammed the Democrats the first time they started the number and he's an equal opportunity offender, and then started the song over. It was a riot. They weren't about to make excuses for themselves even if they were exhausted. At the end of the concert the DJ led us in prayer for Rich's health and for strength for the rest of the band.

I know the members of the mailing list will want to pray as well.

I talked to Rich briefly both before and after the concert and he was congenial. He didn't look sick as much as tired and I don't mean to

alarm anyone about his stomach or start rumors. I'm just passing along what he said during the concert. He also asked if we knew that

he suffers from depression and asked for a show of hands of others that suffer from it. Several people in the front row raised their hands and Rich laughed and remarked that proves depressed people tend to draw other depressed people to themselves. He

said he listens to Irish music instead of taking medication. So, we

might as well pray about that, too.

Rich was in a preaching mood that night, more so than usual even, so

I'll pass along some of the things he talked about. He said we are

here because God in his infinite goodness and abounding love created each of us to know his love and share love. He said that Jesus quite literally loves the hell out of us. He also said that people are sometimes more lonely than they need to be because they don't look beyond their own hurt and disappointment and see that others have these experiences as well. Extending ourselves to feel for others is loving. We don't fulfill our calling as part of Christ's body if we don't obey his command to love others as He loves us.

Rich also talked about the aloneness that we experience no matter how well we are known by another. He said this is because of our fallen state. He used the illustration that he and Beaker are close friends from way back and have pondered all things, "sharing toilets, combs, and toothbrushes." But even with years of friendship between them Beaker was angry one day that it still didn't entirely bridge his aloneness.

Rich thought the most tragic thing in life would be to be the only person on earth. The great thing about being here is being able to have other people to show the neat stuff to. Without anyone else to share with, all the wonders of the world would not make up for the tragedy of being alone.

Finally, Rich hoped that each of us would love someone. He said he meant that we should love someone besides Jesus. Of course we should love Jesus -- he's above us, inside of us, and in his willingness to humble himself and die for us, he is even beneath us. But we are first and foremost to obey Jesus who commanded us to love others. If we don't love we miss the purpose for which God created us.

Well, that was some of the things on Rich's mind. It was a good concert and I enjoyed meeting him. Keep praying for him.

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Milwaukee, Wisconsin Concert Review

↑ kidbrothers.net/reviews/milwaukee.html

This was my third Rich Mullins concert. I'm amazed there weren't reviews of the other two, so I'd like to make up for this oversight by doing a comparison of sorts.

I started listening to Christian music a few years ago, before I was even a Christian (when I was "searching"). Before I started listening to Christian radio, I ran across a music video program called Z Music. It was there that I saw this video with two guys in a pub in Ireland, singing about God being "Here in America". Something about the words and the music caught my attention, and I kept listening.

A few months later, I heard that Rich was going to be in concert at the Waukesha Expo Center, so I dragged a friend to go see. We were blown away! (This was when he was touring with the Ragamuffin Band.) The musicians were all great, the dulcimer rocked, and the drummer (somebody I'd never heard of from a group called The 77's) was kickin', especially when they did "I See You". Oh man, was that great! Everyone left the stage, one by one, and left the drummer at the end, playing out his rhythm for probably a whole 'nuther minute or two. What an exciting concert! Rich played all the songs that I'd seen in videos, but most of the rest I didn't know. I was awfully impressed, and picked up several tapes at the concert. (Prior to that, I owned not a one. I was just familiar with the songs from the videos and those receiving air play.) When I began listening to the tapes, I started to pick up on the depth of the message.

In late 1996, Rich paid another visit to the Milwaukee area with a performance at New Creation church. This performance was vastly different from the first one. It was more like an "unplugged" type of concert, where Rich often asked for requests. (Including a song or two that he couldn't remember the words to!) He played a lot of his numbers on keyboard, but did break out the dulcimer for a few, as well as the guitar.

This Train was also there, and (maybe) Mitch McVicker. This concert was also very enjoyable musically. Rich riled up some of the audience when he went off on CCM. (Er, New Creation brings in a lot of CCM acts, usually to The Light Club, which is a Christian nightclub.) He told the audience something to the effect of they shouldn't be going to concerts to be with God - they should be going to church (and spending time with the Bible). He slammed politics and religious denominations, too. I think he said something to the crowd about being an "equal opportunity offender". Yah, I guess!

Well, that brings me to the August 12, 1997 concert. I had the privilege of attending probably the best of the three concerts - both musically and spiritually. Man-O-Man, was it

good! Mitch McVicker was very unassuming and unaffected - just a nice, humble guy. (Wants to own a frozen custard stand - a very Milwaukee thing.) This Train was loud and spunky, at times almost too loud to understand the words to their songs. The rest of the musicians were really top notch. It was amazing to watch them bounce from one instrument to another. And Rich was, well - awesome. He really poured his heart into the words and music. At this concert, I saw the musician, the poet, the philosopher, and, most importantly, the man who loves God.

Rich and the band played so many excellent songs, it's hard to give highlights! Rich and the mallet percussionist played the classical intro to "Sing Your Praise to the Lord" on the xylophone (sweet!), and Rich ran up in time to sing and play. (And that keyboard part is so excellent.) They did "Screen Door", which was great fun to watch. Another fun thing was when the boys in the back were doing drum corps-style stick maneuvers during one of the numbers. (I think it was "98 Eatonwood Green".) Also performed were "Awesome God", "If I Stand", "Such a Thing as Glory", "While the Nations Rage", "Boy Like Me/Man Like You", "I See You", "Sometimes By Step", "Hold Me Jesus", "Creed", and many others, including one of my favorites, "Ready for the Storm". (Rich called this the one song he wished he had written. He might not have written it, but he certainly interpreted it, weaving the Irish sweater story around it.) We were also delighted to hear some new songs, including "Madeleine".

Rich talked more at this concert than he had at any of the others. It seemed like he has changed since last year. He was very humble and sincere, speaking from his heart. He didn't try to rile anybody up this time. He talked about our needing to be willing to go to jail for a good cause. Since this was a Singles Ministry event, there were a lot of young people in attendance, so he directed his comments toward the youth. He talked to us about the music recitals of his childhood, and how we sometimes act like we're ashamed to be seen with our parents. He talked about Amsterdam and how it caused him to write "Hold Me Jesus". (No doubt. Parts of Amsterdam are like a modern-day Sodom and Gomorrah!) One thing that Rich talked to the audience about was spending more time in the Bible. In particular, he said we could learn a lot from Proverbs. (Amen!) He also said several Rich-isms, including a new one (for me) - "Jesus loves the hell out of us". (How profound!) He returned to the Irish sweater story by saying that although we may be battered, bruised, torn to pieces, God will recognize us and bring us home to Him. ("I know him. He's one of Mine.")

I'd like to end my review with a prayer for the health and happiness of Rich, Mitch, This Train, all the other musicians, and their ministry. May your future endeavors provide you with continued growth, both musically and spiritually. You are bringing the Word of God, through your loving hearts and your music, to more people than you realize. Please don't

ever doubt that.

Review by [Katherine](#)

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Fort Wayne, Indiana Concert Review

↑ kidbrothers.net/reviews/fortwayne.html

Angie Knight

I had to write of last night's concert, although I know I can't write a description that will do it justice. Of the fourteen or so Rich concerts I've attended in the past twelve years, I must say that this was musically the most mature, with more musical (and just as much if not more emotional) depth than any of his others. The closest I'd compare it to as far as the overall feeling would be his tour with Avenue G several years ago.

What made this one different? First of all, the talent of the band (both This Train and the Ragamuffin members that were with him). "Calling Out Your Name" had a whole new depth with Eric's heartfelt cello in addition to the dulcimer, and there was some wonderful, seemingly impossible and intricate percussion with "78 Eatonwood Green" that actually made the instrumental a crowd favorite. Then there was the instrumental "Nothing but the Blood" that started with two hammer dulcimers (Rich AND two band members played them throughout the concert!), and little by little evolved from completely acoustic to completely electric... it was chilling. We were then in awe as the Bach-esque introduction to "Sing Your Praise to the Lord" was played entirely on xylophone by Rich and his percussionist, with Rich running to the keyboard just in time to play background to his vocals.

*Also, this is the first concert I've ever attended during which Rich did **NOT** forget any of the lyrics to his songs (though we never mind... it makes him human). His humanity was retained, however, when he had a case of the hiccups during the a capella "I Will Sing," and Mark [Robertson] (from Ragamuffin and This Train) grinned, reached over, and gave him a whack in the middle of the chest. As per usual, Rich had so much wisdom to share... I wish I'd written more down, but I did take a few notes. One quote that I'll share was what he said between "While the Nations Rage" and "If I Stand": "That was a song that I wrote for the village. This song I wrote for the sky." "If I Stand" has always been one of my favorites (though there are so many), and this made it all the more meaningful... ahh, to write a song for the sky.*

I also must comment about Mitch - this is his fourth concert appearance I've seen, and he has matured as a musical performer so much that he almost seemed like a new person. His rapport with the crowd was fabulous, and I loved hearing his songs with background - they gained a whole new depth. The "Lemonade Song" (as I've dubbed it) had some really funky percussion that added to its whimsical/"profound" feel. Everyone will be glad to know that Mitch said he's entering a recording studio in a week and a half to record an album for the first time. HOORAY!!

I know many people will be jealous... last night was the first night that Canticle was available for sale! I'm listening to it right now, reveling in its beauty. Mitch sang two of its songs last night, in addition to six of his own.

I really ought to mention This Train as well - they were a pleasant, whimsical surprise, as I was completely unfamiliar with them. My husband, who loves punk, bought both cd's and is already hooked. I must say that I've never seen a string bass played quite like Mark did!

One last note - I had a quick chance to chat with Rich before he went on stage, and he said he's feeling better than he was. If he did feel poorly, he most certainly hid it well (as performers are known to do).

A final highlight was that Rich did sing a new song he'd written, so that is, I suppose, a sign that the energy level was back (as it seemed to be). The song was touching - I believe it's called "Madeline's Song," and he wrote it about a little girl who wasn't supposed to be born because of birth defect difficulties, then wasn't supposed to survive past birth, and is now over a year old. Apparently, when Madeleine sleeps, she folds her hands together. The song, written in a waltz beat (unusual for Rich), is a beautiful tribute to how God bends down, perhaps brushing against the mountains, to hear Madeleine when she prays. It is very sweet, with some really pretty harmony on the chorus. Rich and the others also performed a round which, at one point, broke into six parts... it was not a song he wrote, but I do hope he records it.

There is so much else, but I'll just end with one more Rich quote: "What I like about the Bible is that it doesn't make sense, which makes it more like truth than anything else I've ever read."

Review by [Angie Knight](#)

Rich Mullins Tribute - A Concert Review by The Phantom Tollbooth



tollbooth.org/creviews/rmtrib.html

Rich Mullins Tribute
Cornerstone Festival '98
Reviewed by Cathy Courtwright

The evening was intended to honor Rich Mullins, who died unexpectedly less than four months after his appearance at this same festival only a year ago. It was a chance for fans to say goodbye at a gathering of his fellow musicians who shared from their hearts what his untimely death meant to them. The three hour tribute was a solemn remembrance--except when it behaved like an Irish Wake, or a New Orleans jazz procession returning from the graveside to a wild rendition of "When the Saints Go Marchin' In." Death was swallowed up in victory at this alternatively poignant and hilarious evening, a true reflection of the man it was intended to honor.

Cathy Courtwright was backstage during this celebration of a remarkable life--Ed.

I have cooked dinner, hosted concerts, and just chatted with so many of the wonderful people involved in this tribute. However, this tribute was a different type of setting, one I never even dreamt of seeing. It was a great relief for everyone to see each other, to know that after nearly a year, most were doing OK. They still show up late for the sound check, but can still bring a smile to the audience's faces, and put on a great show.

Dave Mullins, Rich's younger brother, began the evening leading us in prayer. He said what I think was the most important thing of the entire evening. God works in our lives in ways that we just don't understand. Sometimes good people do die. But through scripture study, we see that God allows us to go through pain, struggles, and hardships so that he can move, so that we can see exactly why we need him. "Tonight," Dave Mullins concluded, "I hope that. . . we will pay tribute to Rich, but even more to God. Because the good things that were ever said or done by my brother were not done by him. They were done by the Lord God Almighty. Tonight, I hope you enjoy, I hope you are blessed, and bless, by being here."

Sixpence None the Richer was the first band. Lead singer Leigh Bingham-Nash sang “In Your Hands” and “Buenas Noches from Nacogdoches,” which she recorded for the soundtrack of Mullins’s musical, *Canticle of the Plains*. She fondly related how pleased she was to have the chance to do the musical, but recalled Mullins and the guys laughing at her for not being able to hit the high notes. Bingham-Nash admitted this was her first time ever performing songs from *Canticle of the Plains* and joked about the band learning the songs just three hours earlier. Their hasty education became apparent when she declared the beginning of “Buenas Noches” sounded “kind of creepy” and made the band start over, giggling as she apologized. She was relieved to have the Mullins’s songs behind her: “OK, fellas, now we can relax.” The band played some of their own songs, but my favorite part of Sixpence None the Richer’s section was the last song, “I Need Thee Every Hour,” an acknowledgement that Rich Mullins usually included hymns in his concerts. I think he would have liked their choice.

Alyssa Loukota of Compassion USA introduced the next band. “This Train has been a band that has worked with and toured with Rich for awhile. They are a lot of fun, and they have a lot to say. So I hope you guys enjoy them, and just enjoy the mirth and the laughter, which I think is a part of God that we don’t always remember.”

The crowd gave This Train a warm welcome as they took their places singing “Screen Door.” Mark Robertson, lead singer, bass player, and Ragamuffin, immediately interrupted with a joke. “Hey! Well, um, we made sure this would be a proper Rich Mullins tribute by not actually learning all the words. If you’ve seen him, you know what I’m talking about.” Beki Hemingway, a former member of This Train, came on stage to help the guys do the first song that they learned with Mullins, “Somewhere.”

This Train prepared to do their next song, “No, Not One.” Mitch McVicker was supposed to help out, but backstage, we were all frantically looking for him. We looked in vans, in port-a-potties, under everything, anywhere we could think of, while onstage, Robertson stalled for time by telling jokes. We finally had to notify Robertson that McVicker was nowhere to be found! Eric Hauck, a fellow Kid Brother of St. Frank, was within eyeshot and offered to help the band out. Hauck did a fine job--humming--because he had forgotten the words to McVicker’s part of the song. After the song, with a dead pan expression, Robertson advised the audience to hide from McVicker when he came back. The tent was packed beyond capacity. People were several rows deep outside and no one made a move--except to laugh.

“A Million Years,” a hit single from This Train’s new album, was co-written by Mullins, Robertson, and McVicker. As Robertson fondly recalled, Rich Mullins was very generous when it came to songwriting credit: “Co-writing with Rich usually meant you were somewhere in the room and added maybe one word.” Nonetheless, it was one of the biggest honors of his life. Backstage, a couple of songwriters grinned and nodded their heads in agreement.

“Great Atomic Power” found Beki Hemingway and Eric Hauck graciously helping out This Train again, this time because special guest Ashley Cleveland was missing. After the song, Robertson reminded the audience that last year at this festival, on the same stage, This Train did the same song, with Mullins and the Kid Brothers of St. Frank helping them out. Rich Mullins had borrowed a keyboard that was in a different key, Robertson reminisced: “. . .and I have a videotape of Rich just kind of looking puzzled at this piano, and I'm just hoping no one here read lips. If you know Rich well, you know nobody could throw a tantrum quite like Rich Mullins could. And he would always catch himself when it would get really ridiculous and over the edge. He would catch how dumb it was, and would turn [it] into this amazing black comedy piece. And I think I probably miss his temper as much as anything I can think of, because watching him blow up and then make fun of it for the next hour. . . it's funny the things you wish you had back.”

Kid Brothers of St. Frank's Eric Hauck introduced Greg and Rebecca Sparks. Hauck read the introduction from Brennan Manning's *The Ragamuffin Gospel*, which was such an inspiration to Mullins. He spoke of Jesus’ love for the poor, the oppressed, and his compassion. Hauck also reminded us that in seeking to love purely, we grow closer to God.

Rebecca Sparks was the spokesperson for her family. “It's wonderful to be with you tonight, and pay tribute to a dear man that we had wonderful times with on the road traveling, and wonderful times sitting in hotel rooms talking. It was a privilege to have him in our home and a couple of family situations. We've spent time at gravesides together, we've spent time crying about the passing of family members, and we've spent lots of time laughing at just about how weird life could be. We're going to attempt to totally ruin one of his songs right now.” They encouraged the audience to help sing “Hope to Carry On” because in keeping with precedent, they had forgotten some of the words.

Rebecca Sparks joked, “Rich wrote, like, way too many words for me, so...I'm claiming old age and stupidity.” They sang some of their songs that Mullins liked to join in on. “He was kind of cute that way. He'd just walk up on stage and join with

you whatever you were doing, whether you wanted him to be there or not.”

Greg Sparks added, “What'd he say? ‘It's *my* daggoned concert!’”

They performed “Homeland,” written for Greg's father, who was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease over ten years ago. “And Rich spent days and days--we thought he would never leave--at the family farm up in Michigan,” Greg recounted. “This is dedicated to both of them. Rich is a little further over the river than Dad is.”

Backstage, as the humidity continued to rise, Michael Aukofer of the Kid Brothers concentrated on tuning his hammered dulcimer. I took advantage of his intense concentration to snap a quick picture. Evidently, he was already thinking about tomorrow being the Fourth of July, and the poor man freaked out. He explained that he thought the flash of the camera was a fire cracker!

Aaron Smith, the Ragamuffin drummer, introduced the Kid Brothers of St. Frank: Mitch McVicker, Eric Hauck, and Mike Aukofer. He spoke of being a Ragamuffin, not only in the band, but as a follower of Jesus. “We're all ragamuffins, you know; we've been saved by the grace of God and put back together in the way, in the form, that God always intended us to be.”

The Kid Brothers' first song was “Calling Out Your Name.” McVicker told the audience, “We wanted to start with that song because Rich wrote it when he was living in Kansas, and we're all Kansas boys in our own different ways. I grew up in Topeka, Kansas, and Michael grew up in Wichita, Kansas, and Eric grew up in Cincinnati, Ohio.” Hauck pipes in to tell us that he was born in Hillsboro, Kansas, but the crowd had already enjoyed the joke.

McVicker was Mullins's sole traveling companion the night of the tragic accident. He sustained serious injuries that required months of rehabilitation. Damage to his vocal chords made his participation in this event uncertain until two weeks beforehand. His rendition of his first song, “New Mexico,” was well received. It is on his newly released self-titled album, co-produced by Mullins and Robertson, completed only hours before the accident. He was in good spirits. Untangling himself from all of the cords on the stage, McVicker introduced “The Lemonade Song.” When he first wrote it, he thought it was stupid and, “Rich agreed.” But after playing it a while, McVicker decided that it was profound. Hauck asked if Rich agreed again and McVicker chuckled and said, “No, but he still let me sing it in concerts.”

The Kid Brothers of St. Frank sang two songs from *Canticle of the Plains*. McVicker

explained that he always thought “Heaven is Waiting” was significant and now, since Mullins’s death, even more so. McVicker commented about St. Francis of Assisi, the subject of *Canticle*: “Francis probably followed Jesus more literally and more radically than anybody. Radicalness is not so much in the color of your hair or how many body parts you have pierced. I think the most radical you can be is to follow Jesus.” They flowed into the song “There You Are” then “When You Love,” an early Rich Mullins song that the two were originally going to re-write together. With Mullins gone, McVicker decided to go ahead and redo it on his own. Michael Aukofer played a hammered dulcimer arrangement of the song “It is Well with My Soul.” Most people who had seen a Rich Mullins concert could recall him leading the audience in this, his favorite hymn, and they quietly hummed along.

Aukofer, Hauck, and McVicker together did a song McVicker recently wrote for Mullins called “Rich’s Song.” Then McVicker stood alone and told the audience, “I want to end with this song. It’s a song that Rich wrote, and I would love it when he would do it in concert. I think it’s a terribly true song, and I think it’s really relevant to this particular situation. And I can’t think of a better song that better sums up how Rich saw things. It makes me think of him, and it’s called ‘Bound to Come Some Trouble.’”

McVicker introduced the Ragamuffins (Aaron Smith, Jimmy Abegg, Rick Elias, and Mark Robertson) and Ashley Cleveland for the Tribute finale. The Ragamuffins began with a bang--“My Deliverer”--from the just released *the Jesus record*, Mullins’s last album, realized posthumously by the crew on stage. Standing right next to the speakers, it almost blew me over. The colored lights flashed to the beat of what I believe was the most powerful song of the evening.

Continuing with songs from *the Jesus record*, Rick Elias, who produced the album, warned that he didn’t know if they were really ready for this, but they proved they were by going directly into “Surely God is with Us” then “Hard to Get.” The Ragamuffins left the stage for Cleveland’s solo, “Jesus.” I studied the main Tribute players. They were no longer playing around having a jolly time; they were silently serious. Dave Mullins sat in the back of a truck just looking toward heaven. Robertson watched Cleveland, Smith sat without saying a word, and Jimmy Abegg stared at his glass of water.

“You Did Not Have a Home” brought all the Ragamuffins back on stage, but they were not joking when they warned of not being ready. One of them mumbled some words, causing Robertson, Elias, and Abegg to all start laughing. Elias announced to the audience it was participation time: “Well, the sitting part of the show is over--we’ve done our part. Now you guys are gonna have to help out, because, quite

frankly, we can't go on without you.” McVicker, Hauck, Aukofer, and Cleveland returned and together with the audience everyone sang rousing versions of “Creed” and “I See You.”

The honest but under-prepared Elias instructed the assembled to, “Sit down, but you guys just keep going. We have a couple of other songs we're gonna need your help on.” “It is Well with My Soul,” “Sometimes by Step,” and the doxology followed. The musicians quietly left the stage one by one during the doxology and the audience finished alone, bringing back memories of the many times Mullins would end his concerts in much the same fashion.

Realizing the end was near, the crowd’s sustained applause faded into chants of “Awesome God.” Once more the musicians took to the stage, and Elias cried, “OK! Uncle! Let's do it! ... All right, all we know is the chorus, so sing along. Let’s go!”

“Our God is an awesome God...” rang out over and over through the darkness. Loud cheers and a mad rush to personally thank the artists closed an emotion-filled celebratory farewell to a much-loved, much-missed artist.

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[RichMailList 211]: Cornerstone 98

↑ kidbrothers.net/rmml/rmml211.html

Date: 14 July 1998

To: RichMailList

Subject: [RichMailList 211]: Cornerstone 98

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Sandy McMullen's Cornerstone review

Date: Sun, 05 Jul 1998 03:38:30

From: [Sandy McMullen](#)

Subject: Rich tribute

_THE RICH MULLINS TRIBUTE AT CORNERSTONE '98:-
A REASONABLY SHORT REVIEW OF A VERY LONG (FOUR HOUR) PROGRAM

Alyssa Loukota with Compassion International opened the Cornerstone '98

Rich Mullins Tribute, which was held July 3, 1998, at Cornerstone Farm

in Bushnell, Illinois. She introduced David Mullins, Rich's brother,

the head of the foundation begun for Rich, 'The Legacy of a Kid Brother

Of St. Frank'. David led in prayer, then gave thanks to those who had

supported him and his family throughout this time. He comforted us with

words regarding his brother's death, reminding us how God works through

all circumstances, even our suffering, for our best and for His will.

Sixpence None The Richer followed David, with Leigh Bingham Nash telling some of her experiences during the recording of CANTICLE OF THE PLAINS, for which she sang the part of Clare. They did two songs from CANTICLE, "In Your Hands" (which Leigh had trouble getting through) and "Buenos Noches," and then two of their own songs, "Sister/Mother," and "Puedo Escribir." Leigh ended the set with a beautiful rendition of "I Need Thee Every Hour."

Alyssa came back on and introduced This Train. What a surprise! They went right into a lively version of Rich's "Screen Door." Mark Robertson announced they would be inviting friends to join them throughout their set, and asked Beki Hemmingway to come up to help with Rich's "Somewhere." (He said Beki was not a former member of TT, she just no longer tours with them or comes to practice.) For the next song Mark introduced Mitch McVicker and the Kid Brothers, but Eric Hauck was the only one who came on stage--Mark then said he was being backed up by Eric, Eric, and Eric--the song was an old hymn, "No Not One." Afterwards Mark teased that since Mitch forgot to show up, we in the audience should try to 'disappear' for Mitch's first couple of songs "A Million Years" (MIMES) followed. Mark said Rich wrote about 98% of the song, but insisted on sharing the songwriting credits with him. Mark said, "That's the way Rich was. If you were in the room with him you got credit." Ashley Cleveland (who sings backup vocals for This

Train on
MIMES OF THE OLD WEST) had specifically asked Mark if she could
sing
"Great Atomic Power" (MIMES) with them, but she didn't come to the
stage
when he called her (at the suggestion of someone in the audience
Mark
commented she must be off somewhere doing a set with Mitch,) so
Eric and
Beki came back. Mark ended with a very moving "Goodbye" (MIMES).
He
said Rich told him it was the best song Mark had ever written.

Greg and Rebecca Sparks came on next, old friends of Rich who in
the
past had toured with him, opening with Rich's "Hope To Carry On."
They
did several of their own songs, songs they said were favorites of
Rich.
The first two were "I Believe" (FLESH & BLOOD) and "Field Of Your
Soul"
(FIELD OF YOUR SOUL.) Rebecca paraphrased Romans 12:1, and invited
us
to worship with her song, "Be Still And Know," Rich's "I See You,"
and
the song "There Is None Like You." One comment between songs stood
out--she said, "How free we become when we don't have much left."
They
ended with three more songs, the first a song about heaven that
Rich
said was his favorite, "Homeland" (FIELD OF YOUR SOUL),
"Beatitudes"
(FLESH & BLOOD), and "I Can't Dance When You Stand On My Feet."
;)

Aaron Smith (drummer for the Ragamuffin Band) spoke next, the
recurring
theme this night being ragamuffinism--how we all have our stories,
we
become 'ragamuffins' because we are torn, and then God puts us back

together. He also shared that Rich challenged each of them to reach beyond where they were, always telling them, "You can!"

Mitch McVicker and the Kid Brothers (Michael Aukofer and Eric Hauck) began with Michael playing a beautiful hammered dulcimer intro into "Calling Out Your Name," Eric accompanying on cello, Mitch on guitar (and vocals). Mitch said Rich had written that song for Kansas, and loved wherever he happened to be living. He said he thought Rich loved New Mexico best of all, and then did "New Mexico" (written by Mitch and Rich.) It was followed by the "Lemonade Song," and both songs are on Mitch's new project. Mitch did two songs from CANTICLE, "Heaven Is Waiting" and "There You Are" (Mitch co-wrote CANTICLE with Rich and Beaker), and then did a new arrangement he wrote for Rich's song "When You Love." Michael played an instrumental version of "It Is Well With My Soul" on the dulcimer with Eric on cello (one of Rich's favorite old hymns.) Mitch shared "Rich's Song" with us, which he had just written, and the chorus goes:

I'm sure you smile a lot more than you ever did before
and I can hear you laughing and carrying on from here
but this world took its toll so you went out through the door
and I could tell it all was drawing near
I just had no idea it was so close
but He was always calling you home

Mitch ended with a song he said summed up how Rich saw things, Rich's "Bound To Come Some Trouble."

As the stage was being set up for the Ragamuffins, Mitch told how

every
morning on the road Rich had met with Eric and Michael and him for
a
time of Bible study, and then read for us Romans 11:33-36, one of
the
Bible passages they had memorized together:

Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God!
How unsearchable His judgments, and His paths beyond tracing
out!

Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been His
counselor?

Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him?
For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things.
To Him be the glory forever! Amen.

The Ragamuffin Band portion of the show began with several songs
from
THE JESUS RECORD. Tom Howard's haunting piano introduced "My
Deliverer,"
and was joined by the other instruments to become a mighty crescendo
(Jimmy A on guitar, Mark Robertson on bass, Rick Elias on guitar
and
lead vocal, Aaron Smith on drums, Phil Madiera on keyboards.) It
was
very powerful. Mark did "Surely God Is With Us" (which he wrote for
TJR)
and then Rick sang "Hard To Get," one of the first songs Rich
presented
to them for the project. Ashley Cleveland came and did "Jesus,"
and
they followed it with "You Did Not Have A Home." Very quietly
Michael
A. began the dulcimer intro into "Creed," the crowd cheered, and
then
sang along with Rick. The Ragamuffins went right into "I See You"
(with
a great vocal lead by Ashley) and then "It Is Well With My Soul".
With
Michael on dulcimer Rick began "Sometimes By Step," and the crowd

took
over, such thunderous singing! The Doxology followed, at the end
of
which, with the crowd still singing, the Ragamuffins left the stage
one
by one, Jimmy A remaining until the last, acknowledging God's
presence
by bowing reverently before exiting.

Sustained applause dissolved into chants of "Awesome God, Awesome
God!"
The Ragamuffins came back on stage (Ashley carrying her purse as
though
she were going somewhere) and Rick took the mic and yelled "Uncle!"
The
Ragamuffins admitted they only knew the chorus, so we all sang the
chorus together as a final song of praise---

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Geoff Horton's Cornerstone review

From: [Geoff Horton](#)
Subject: Geoff's *long* concert writeup
Date: Sun, 5 Jul 1998 13:26:18

I'm going to post my full Cornerstone writeup on the Web so that I
don't
wind up too far off topic. (OK, I will mention that Third Day
included a
supercharged (and very, very good) cover of "Creed" in their encore
set;
until then, I had no idea that anyone could body-surf to anything
Rich
wrote.) My thoughts and memories on the tribute concert are on-
topic, and
here they are:

(All quotes are my best memory; don't hang anyone out to dry just because I said they said something! I also don't vouch entirely for song names or chronology, though I'm checking both against Sandy's review (thanks, Sandy!).)

I got to the Compassion tent while the soundchecks were still in progress, having just finished helping to interview John Fischer (!) (probably my second biggest highlight of C-stone). Mitch and the Kid Brothers (Mike and Eric) did a bit of "There You Are" for their check. This Train (after Mark was located) did a full run-through of "I Saw the Light," which had much of the audience clapping and singing along. This was the only chance of the night to hear it, because they didn't play it during their part of the concert. Leigh Nash (Sixpence None the Richer) did a bit of "In Your Hands."

After a few minutes, Alyssa from Compassion (thanks to Sandy, BTW; I had no idea who that was) started things off by welcoming the crowd, reminding us that we were there not just to remember Rich, but to praise and worship God. She then introduced Sixpence.

They started with "In Your Hands." They then started "Buenos Noches" but had to stop because something wasn't quite right. Leigh said she needed a moment to fix the music, and she also needed to regain her composure ("In Your Hands" was emotionally tough for her to sing). With the second

start, they
got to the finish, though it still had rough edges. Leigh told us
that the
rest of the band had just learned those songs, which put them in
the same
position she was in when she recorded them: "I got up to Chicago,
learned my
songs in about two hours, and recorded them." They closed with a couple
songs of their own; since I'm not a Sixpence-ite, I can't tell you
what they
were. They ended with "I Need Thee Every Hour," and then hustled
off the
stage and out of the venue. I think they had to get on the road
fast, and
I'm grateful they stayed to do their part.

Next up was This Train, again introduced by Alyssa, who called Mark
"Mr.
Mirth." They led off their set with "Screen Door," a choice that
fits in
really well with the TT style. Mark forgot some of the words, but
claimed
this only lent a note of authenticity to any Rich concert! Next was
"Somewhere" (assisted by Beki H.), which didn't suffer in the
translation,
but certainly underwent more changes than "Screen Door" did. A
brief
interruption followed a request to move a poorly-placed car.

Next, Mark invited Mitch and the Kid Brothers to join them onstage.
Repeated
invitations yielded only Eric and a suggestion from the audience
that Mitch
was busy moving his car. So, backed by (as Mark put it) "Eric,
Eric, and
Eric," they did "I Need Thee Every Hour," with Eric reading the
words for
Mitch's verse off of a card.

"A Million Years" was up next. Mark said he contributed about a sentence to it, but Rich insisted on giving him a co-writer credit. "If you were in the room when Rich wrote a song, you got credit."

Mark said that Ashley Cleveland had specifically asked to sing on "that goofy song you guys do," which he noted is not a great help in locating any particular song in the TT repertoire. (Parenthetical aside: I wish they could have come up with a way to play "Monster Truck".) Repeated summonses didn't produce Ashley, though they did get an audience suggestion that she was wherever Mitch was. Mark said, "Fine! I know who our real friends are [tongue in cheek, of course]! Beki, come on out!" That did produce Beki, and Eric too. Mark wouldn't tell her what they were going to sing, but she figured out fast enough that it was "Atomic Power."

After they were done, Mark said they played that because they'd done it last year at Cornerstone (I was there! First time I ever heard TT, as a matter of fact.) and Rich had come up on stage, borrowed a piano from someone (I think it was Three Crosses, if it matters), and discovered only after they'd started playing that it was tuned differently than he expected. Mark: "I'm hoping no one in the crowd could read lips."

They closed the set with "Goodbye." Mark said something that made me think he and Beaker wrote it before Rich died, which is really odd.

Greg and Rebecca Sparks were next. They cheerfully admitted that most of us had no idea who they are, but they're friends of Rich's who've been playing the coffeehouse circuit in blissful obscurity for twenty years. "Hope to Carry On" was their first song, and the first time I started crying. They followed with a several of their own songs, mentioning that Rich would often join them on stage "whether we wanted him there or not. It's my dad-gum concert!" Somewhere in there, they also did the night's first rendition of "Step by Step." I cried for that, too.

Aaron Smith (Ragamuffin drummer) spoke while the Kid Bros. were setting up. His basic topic was about being a ragamuffin - not the band, just one of God's broken, repaired, and loved people. He also told us how Rich had wanted each of them to sing on "The Jesus Record," and they talked him out of it. Aaron: "I bet Rich is sitting in Heaven laughing at us, because he got it his way after all." He handled the intro of Mitch and the Kid Brothers.

Mitch looks pretty good, a little gaunt maybe (but he's always been that way). His voice is better than he gives himself credit for, especially when he quits worrying about it. It's hoarser than it used to be; Dylan is the obvious comparison, but I think Mitch still has better tone quality. It was beautiful to see the companionship and camaraderie onstage. I think Eric and Michael have done a lot to help Mitch.

As for the music: Sandy has them opening with "Calling Out Your Name," which they did indeed do (great work by Mike on the dulcimer), but I really think that wasn't first. I couldn't tell you what was, though. Next was "New Mexico" followed by Mitch-fan favorite "The Lemonade Song." Mitch said that he thought it was stupid when he wrote it, and that Rich agreed. Over time, Mitch decided that it was profound instead. Eric interrupted to ask if Rich thought so too. Mitch laughed and said, "I don't think so, but since I did, he let me play it in concert anyhow."

"Heaven is Waiting" is the first song Mitch and Rich ever wrote together, and that was up next, followed by "There You Are", and a semi-rewritten (with Rich's encouragement) version of "When You Love." Since, as Mitch put it, no Rich-based concert could be complete without it, Michael (dulcimer) and Eric (cello) did a lovely arrangement of "It is Well with my Soul".

Michael and Eric then left the stage, leaving Mitch alone. Before he could say or do anything, the crowd rose and gave him a several minute long standing ovation, which I think was a much-deserved tribute to his courage and dedication. As the applause died down, Mitch went to the mike, thanked everyone and said, "In my best preacher-style, [bass voice] please be seated." He then did "Bound to Come Some Trouble."

During the Ragamuffins' setup, Mitch read Romans 11:33-36, which

Rich and
the Kid Brothers had studied extensively last summer, to the point
where
Mitch had it memorized (though residual memory problems from the
accident
are still with him; earlier Mark jokingly said, during the search
for Mitch,
that it gives him a perfect excuse to miss things).

The Rags+ (Ashley Cleveland, Phil Madeira, and someone whom I
didn't
recognize but Sandy says might be Tom Howard, were all there in
addition to
the official Ragamuffins of Mark, Rick, Jimmy and Aaron) led off
with a
powerful rendition of "My Deliverer." I'd never heard the whole
thing before
(my copy of TJR is in the mail and I can't stand listening to our
local CCM
station long enough to catch a playing), but I now know what the
rest of you
have been talking about.

"Surely God is With Us" was next, and the jaunty music was a
perfect match.
Rick sang "Hard to Get", which he told us was maybe the first song
on the
album that Rich played for any of the Rags. Ashley Cleveland sang
"Jesus,"
followed by the group rendition of "You Did Not Have a Home."

Somewhere in here, Rick said that they really hadn't had enough
time to
rehearse, but that made it only a standard Ragamuffin appearance at
Cornerstone. "If you can't mess up in front of family, where can
you?" (Side
note: Rick apparently wound up with front-man duties.)

That concluded The Jesus Record portion of the concert, but they
went right

into "Creed." I was struck by how marvelous it is to have people dancing and singing to an expression of faith that is nearly two thousand years old. "In the scheme of eternity, millenia don't seem to be worth much more than a dime" indeed!

Ashley lead "I See You," with some really booming drum work from Aaron adding energy to an already pepped up crowd and performers. The group, and crowd, then sang "It is Well With my Soul," followed by "Sometimes by Step" (I think Ashley was doing lead, but it might have been Rick), and ending with Rick starting the doxology, and the Rags slipping off-stage as the crowd sang through to the end with a beautiful hushed four-part "Amen" to finish it.

I don't think they'd planned on an encore, but repeated chants of "Awe-some God! Awe-some God!" finally brought the band back on stage. Rick warned us that they knew only the chorus, and that we'd all have to sing along, which was not a problem!

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Links to other Cornerstone info

Official Cornerstone Page

<http://cornerstone.jesusfreak.com>

Cornerstone 98 Rich Tribute - complete transcription (45K) by [Geoff Horton](#), ([Ragamuffin List moderator](#))

<http://members.aol.com/Geoffr4646/Tribute.htm>

Giovanni Audiori's Cornerstone Rich Tribute Page by [Eric Townsend](#)
<http://www.geocities.com/SunsetStrip/Palladium/8539/GioCornMullins.html>

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San Antonio, TX 09/12 review

↑ kidbrothers.net/rmml/rmml219.html

Date: 17 Sep 1998

To: RichMailList

Subject: [RichMailList 219]: San Antonio, TX 09/12 review

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[Return to Light 99 Online](#)

- [Tricia Duncan's San Antonio review](#)
 - [Denise and friends San Antonio review](#) *(added 25 Sep 98)*
-

Tricia Duncan's San Antonio review

Date: Mon, 14 Sep 1998 09:09:27

From: [Tricia Duncan](#)

Subject: San Antonio Concert

Dan'l

I saw the San Antonio date in your latest ragamuffin post and impulsively drove from Dallas to San Antonio to see the show. I hadn't seen dates closer to Dallas. Imagine my chagrine when reading my tour t-shirt Sunday morning, I saw that they are planning to come to McKinney....but, I still had a good trip.

The show was very good. I say good not great for a couple of reasons.

They admitted upfront that they hadn't rehearsed or planned enough, Mark

was sick (I think) and I just plain missed Rich. They didn't try

to
replace him though, and I appreciate that.

The show started with This Train. The reason I say I think Mark was sick was he was very low key...for him and he coughed a few times. He told a lot of the same stories from last year, so I won't go into it too much. One funny thing though, he and Cobra Joe traded hair color....Mark is now blonde and Cobra Joe is now red-headed. One thing that was very touching, when they performed "Million Years," no one sang Rich's harmony. It was like they couldn't bring themselves to take his place, even in song.

Mitch and the Kid Brothers of St. Frank came on next. Mitch seemed to be doing well, but I think he was very nervous, he talked and sang a lot faster and was a little stammer-y. His voice sounded great. But, he said he still has trouble with double vision. Mark introduced the band and spoke about how thankful they were to not have lost Mitch when God called Rich home.

He sang 4 or 5 songs from his self-titled CD, no new songs.

He admitted that he hadn't known that this was a tribute to Rich. So, his set wasn't set up as a tribute, "but you can't brush your teeth at a guy's sink for 2 1/2 years without being influenced by him."

After Mitch finished his set, he received a very long standing ovation.

I think everyone was so excited to see him doing so well. He tried to ignore it in a very humble way. He finally spoke into the microphone when we wouldn't let up. He said that while we were waiting for the band that we came to hear (as if it wasn't also him), he'd tell us a joke. I won't ruin it for you....he may tell it to you, too. It was funny and cute. It was just so good to see him.

When the Ragamuffins came out they started with My Deliverer. First, let me say one thing...Rick Elias is much better in person than recorded. You can really see and hear the emotion and prayer-like attitude that infuses his singing. The crowd went wild with "My Deliverer" singing the chorus to replace the recorded chorus. It was cool. They only performed the songs they sing on the album...."Man of No Reputation" and "Hard to Get" were haunting with Rick, again, singing with an attitude of prayer and submission to his Lord.

Right before the break, Rick spoke to us about Compassion and the Ragamuffins. He said, don't worry, this isn't an altar call....I'm a ragamuffin. Rick told us that Rich's plan had been to do the Jesus Record together, he would do a solo album and the Ragamuffins would do an album, then they would tour. Rick said that they still plan to stay together as the Ragamuffins, if we wanted them to, and do another album.

Well, of course, the crowd approved.

After the break they came out and dedicated the remainder of the

show to
us. about During this time they spoke of their friend Rich,
joked
about touring with him, how he would hand them 45 or 50 songs a
few days
before the tour and expect them to be ready. They said if you got
to
see the last show of a tour, you saw a well rehearsed show.

And they talked about mourning him and how this concert was as
much for
them as it was for us. I got the impression that part of the
reason
they didn't prepare a lot was they were too sad.

They did their Rich Mullins favorites with the following line-up:

Mark sang "Somewhere" (He prefaced the song by telling the story
that as
he travels from state to state he likes to think of the songwriter
from
each state that is his favorite. He was in Indiana and couldn't
think
of one...making fun of himself for forgetting that his very
favorite
songwriter, Rich, was from Indiana.)

Rick's favorite was "The Breaks"

Jimmy's was "I Am Ready for the Storm" (Before which he told a
very
scaled down version of the Irish sweater story.)

Rick then did another song, for the life of me I can't remember
which.

Aaron read from Ephesians regarding putting on the full armor of
God so
we may stand and then sang "If I Stand." Mitch and Eric joined
them for

this one.

They brought out the table and cups and did "Submarine." They were afraid they had forgotten it...no problem, it was great. Mark, Mitch, Aaron and Eric provided percussion.

Mitch then performed "Calling Out Your Name" with Michael on the Hammered Dulcimer.

They all sang:
"I See You"
"Awesome God"

Rick sang "Creed" - Michael again provided HD

Encore -
Jimmy sang "Hold Me Jesus"

"Step-by-Step"
And they left us with the Doxology.

At the end of the Doxology a very angelic sounding Amen went up.

So I highly recommend going to see the show when it comes to your area.

It was bittersweet in that it may be the last time we get to hear a full set of Rich music live.

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Denise and friends San Antonio review
as posted to the [Ragamuffin Mailing List](#)

(added 25 Sep 98)

From: [Marilee](#)

Date: Thu, 17 Sep 1998 20:01:41 EDT
Subject: [ragamuffin] San Antonio Review

Bandwidth warning: WIDE LOAD! Big review ahead... Pass with caution!!!

I'd like to submit the following San Antonio Review (9/12) by Denise
(NarrowGate@aol.com) with a little help from her friends:

Keeping an eye on ominously black clouds and dodging raindrops leftover
from Tropical Storm Frances, we made the trip from Houston to San Antonio on September 12, the first stop on the This Train/Mitch McVicker/Ragamuffin Band tour. Appropriately, as Mark Robertson revealed
during the concert, Sept. 12th, 1997 was the date that Rich first played
the demo tape for him that eventually became The Jesus Record. Rain and
lousy motel room notwithstanding, the evening was well worth the effort
to go, in every respect.

The concert was opened by local songwriter Chris Taylor, whose music was
aptly described by Mark as "intelligent, artsy, and folksy". The low
key, acoustic three song set was followed by an introduction of This
Train by Kid Brother Eric Hauck.

The band that tours in a converted milk truck delivered their trademark
energetic set, beginning with "Like it or Not" and "I Saw the Light". At
that point they launched into their "tribute" song to the "least of
these" to which Jesus must have been referring, the "Mimes of the Old

West", followed by "A Million Years". By this point they had experienced numerous technical difficulties, causing Mark to wisecrack about their "vintage" equipment. During "A Million Years", Jordan was forced to abandon his guitar, leaving Mark and Cobra Joe to finish the song with a bass and drum duet (which actually sounded pretty cool!), prodding Mark to joke that he thought the guitar was seriously over-rated. Their final song was the sensitive, romantic (!) "Monster Truck," all of which left us - even those who initially did not know what to expect - wishing for a full scale This Train concert.

During the set change for Mitch and the Kid Brothers, Mark spoke about the accident that still, a year later, remains on our minds, and about the growth in Mitch's life as a result. When Mitch, Eric, and Michael Aukofer took the stage, Mitch spoke about how he seemed to be stuck in a song writing rut because his songs were all about love. His set consisted of "Here and Now", "Freedom", "Take Hold of Me", "Only Love Will", and "The Lemonade Song". Between the three guys nine different instruments were played, and it was poignant to watch the way in which Eric and Michael truly "backed up" Mitch, and not just musically. Between songs Mitch spoke in a halting, though lighthearted way, about various things, including the fact that he still had residual double-vision from the accident and to him, the audience looked huge!

But when he spoke about the "love in action" he had seen both Rich and Compassion demonstrate on the reservation, he became tearful and struggled to get the words out. People have spoken before about his quiet, unassuming demeanor, and that was certainly in evidence Saturday night.

When Mitch was through with his set, they began to set up for the Ragamuffins, but the audience, who had been clapping rose to its feet to give Mitch a rousing, standing ovation. Mitch appeared to be embarrassed. Michael whispered something into Mitch's ear and Mitch stepped up to the mic, motioned for us to sit down and proceeded to tell us a joke about a gorilla in a zoo that had everyone laughing.

At that point Rick Elias (dressed like the original "man in black"), Aaron Smith, Jimmy Abegg and Mark took the stage. There was a tangible change in the atmosphere of the concert. Perhaps it is Rick's commanding stage presence, or the amount of collective talent between the guys, or maybe just an awareness of the history behind the Homeless Man tour, but from that point on it was difficult to take notes because we were so intent on what was happening onstage.

They opened with "My Deliverer" which the audience joined in enthusiastically, as if our "collaboration" could convey our approval and our deep, heartfelt appreciation for the efforts these guys have made. Afterward, Mark commented to the audience that the band had decided to stay together "if that's all right with you", which met

with
more overwhelming approval. Then followed "Surely God is With Us,"
"You
Did Not Have a Home" and "Hard to Get", after which Rick smiled
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commented that, "we don't know what's going on, if that isn't
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yet" (alluding to some Rich-style glitches like forgotten lyrics!)
At
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understatement as it has been said that this was one of Rich's
very
favorite songs (written by Rick) - "Man of No Reputation."

Afterward, the house lights were turned up, the band took a break
(during which Rich's boom box version of TJR was played over the
PA) and
Rick gave a very impassioned and articulate speech, seated on the
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of the stage, about Rich and how he "used music as a means to an
end".
Reminiscent of Rich's story-telling ability, Rick described what
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people "like pieces of a quilt." Some people got one piece, others
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joined together, it became "a big, beautiful blanket."

He told how excited Rich was over the upcoming Jesus Record, and
he
mentioned how totally transparent and honest Rich was, even to a
fault,

and that was why he was so loved. He also gave a plug for Compassion International, mentioning their new project, working with the inner city poor, which he described as his own background.

Break over, and in a strikingly familiar fashion, four chairs were set up across the stage. The guys returned and Mark (imagine his dry sense of humor) announced that "they hadn't rehearsed this set at all", which was, to their credit, only occasionally apparent. They seated themselves across the stage, up front, and for the next (hour?) gave a very warm, relaxed, often funny and often reflective tribute to Rich. Beginning with Mark doing a slower acoustic version of "Somewhere," each of the Rags soloed on a Rich song. Jimmy followed with a beautifully sung version of "Ready for the Storm" which was preceded by a rambling round of banter between the guys, including an abbreviated Irish Sweater story, and a humorous revelation that "Rich was a simple guy - his songs were always played in G" (or according to Rick, an obscure, guitar friendly key like C sharp).

Jimmy commented then that the audience probably knew the song lyrics better than they did, because when they were just Rich's band, all they did was play the songs, and never worried about the lyrics. He became serious at that point and, referring to the theme of "Ready for the Storm" as being ready for death, and stated, "The more years I spend on this planet, the more I want to get off."

Rick took over at that point and told about meeting Rich for the first time on a Compassion trip to Guatemala and sang what he said was his favorite Rich song, "The Breaks". Then followed what was probably the most emotional musical moment of the evening. Aaron read the passage in Ephesians 6 about the full armor of God, and "after you have done everything, to stand..." By then Mitch, Michael, and Eric had joined the Rags on stage and pretty much everybody sang BGV's to Aaron's emotional lead on "If I Stand". The word "moving" can not begin to describe that moment on stage. (Can we PLEASE get a concert video???)

Well, from the sublime to the ridiculous, from the heart-rending to the light-hearted - at that point Mark cracked, "It occurred to us during intermission that we should learn this," referring, of course, to "Screen Door" and the cup routine. Aaron laughed and pointed to our list's very own Angie and said, "This one's for you!" (initially they had planned to scrap it because of lack of rehearsal, but she encouraged otherwise - thankfully!.) Picture (from left to right), Eric, Aaron, Mitch and Mark executing a near- flawless... well, ok, reasonably good, rendition of the cup thing. It was hilarious!

Then, back to the poignant, as Michael beautifully played the intro to "Calling out Your Name" on the hammer dulcimer with Mitch singing lead.

From that point on, we were all on our feet as the guys blasted through
"I See You", "Awesome God", and "Creed", then slowed down a bit with
Jimmy doing the lead on "Hold Me Jesus". After commenting "We miss him,
but we still have his songsá", Rick invited us to continue joining in as
they closed the concert by singing "Sometimes by Step" and "Doxology".
Just as they did when Rich was with us, the band quietly left the stage
as the audience continued singing the Doxology acappella. It ended in a
spine-tingling, extended silence that was finally broken by a woman
exclaiming, "Wow!"

What a night....

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San Antonio, Texas Concert Review

↑ kidbrothers.net/reviews/sanantonio.html

September 9, 1998

Denise

Keeping an eye on ominously black clouds and dodging raindrops leftover from Tropical Storm Frances, we made the trip from Houston to San Antonio on September 12, the first stop on the This Train/Mitch McVicker/Ragamuffin Band tour. Appropriately, as Mark Robertson revealed during the concert, Sept. 12th, 1997 was the date that Rich first played the demo tape for him that eventually became The Jesus Record. Rain and lousy motel room notwithstanding, the evening was well worth the effort to go, in every respect.

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Afterward, the house lights were turned up, the band took a break (during which Rich's boom box version of TJR was played over the PA) and Rick gave a very impassioned and articulate speech, seated on the steps of the stage, about Rich and how he "used music as a means to an end".

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What a night....

Review by [Denise](#)

[Return to Calling Out Your Name](#)

[RichMailList 222]: Cleveland, OH 09/18 review

↑ kidbrothers.net/rmml/rmml222.html

Date: 26 Sep 1998

To: RichMailList

Subject: [RichMailList 222]: Cleveland, OH 09/18 review

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From: [Louann Terry](#)

Subject: [ragamuffin] Cleveland concert

Date: Sun, 20 Sep 1998 22:02:11

Last night I attended the Homeless Man Tour concert. It was really an awesome experience. The concert was sponsored by TeenLife which is a youth ministry for Catholic teens. It was moving to see teens unashamedly worshiping God. They even had hand motions for "Awesome God".

The format for the concert was similar to what others have posted, but the location was changed three times...the last change was so sudden that even though I had tickets I would have missed the concert if I hadn't noticed an orange sign pointing me to the new location. Because of that the concert was about an hour late starting. They had some trouble with the sound system which I am sure bothered them much more than us.

This Train did the opening set. It was the first time I had ever

heard

their music. I enjoyed it...they are great musicians and very funny.

Next was Mitch McVicker, Michael Aukofer (WOW), and Eric Hauck. I really enjoyed their music. The Lemonade Song made me laugh and Only Love Will made me cry. I bought the CD and am in the process of wearing it out.

Mitch's voice was great, I am certainly not an expert, but he seemed to have great range and was under control. He sounded like he does on the CD and

didn't he record that before the accident? Michael is obviously not only

beautiful to watch, but also extremely talented...what a smile!!! Eric

looks like a homeless person, but plays like he could be in any great

symphony. I saw him ministering to a man in the lobby and he oozed love and

compassion...a glimpse of Jesus. They had fun and were joking about the

sound system. Every time Eric would move his cello would hit the mic and

after a couple times he looked like a puppy and said he was going to get

kicked out...to which Mitch replied that it would be his foot print on his

behind. They had fun together, it's as if they let Mitch pretend to be the

boss. I wish they would have played longer.

Next was The Ragamuffins: Jimmy Abegg, Rick Elias, Mark Robertson & Aaron

Smith.....who was that on the keyboards?(a fifth member of the band). They

opened with My Deliverer, then they did Hard To Get, Heaven In His Eyes, Man

of No Reputation, Surely God is with Us, and You Did Not Have a Home....not necessarily in that order. I wish they had done All the Way to Kingdom Come, because it rocks and would have been fun. They mentioned about today being the anniversary of Rich's death but did not dwell on it. A black man (maybe it was Aaron Smith, but then, who was on drums?) came up and read Eph. 6:12-18 and then they went right into If I Stand. They did the Screen Door song with the cups on a table....(I would love to learn that...it was a riot). Lots of Rich's songs...all the really popular ones....the crowd finally got into it and sang along. They ended with the Doxology....very Rich like.

If you can make it to a concert you will enjoy it if you liked Rich in concert. I was moved and had a great time :-).

Be God's,

Louann

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[RichMailList 223]: Lancaster, PA 09/20 reviews

↑ kidbrothers.net/rmml/rmml223.html

Date: 27 Sep 1998

To: RichMailList

Subject: [RichMailList 223]: Lancaster, PA 09/20 reviews

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- [Patty Hegberg's Lancaster review](#)
 - [Michael's Lancaster review](#)
-

Patty Hegberg's Lancaster review

Date: Sun, 20 Sep 1998 22:15:04

From: [Patty Hegberg](#)

Subject: Lancaster, PA concert

Hi Danl!

Just got back from the Ragamuffins' concert in Lancaster, PA - it was great to see them! The crowd seemed a little subdued throughout the first half - maybe because of it being the day after the one year anniversary of the accident.

This Train started the lineup with their considerably pepped up version of "I Saw the Light", "Mimes of the Old West", "A Million Years" and "Monster Truck" (introduced to us as a "love song"? from a "sensitive" band?? - I love Mark's humor). They had a little trouble with the

sound, in fact, Mark, Rick and Jimmy had to talk to the sound guys a few times throughout the show. They didn't say much about Rich, except that they missed him and were glad to still have Mitch.

Mitch and the Kid Brothers were next - I was really impressed at how they could switch to so many different instruments!! I'm not sure of the exact titles of the songs, but they started with His Love is Right Here and Right Now, with Eric on mandolin and Michael on congas. I think the next one was Freedom with Michael on dulcimer and Eric on cello. Mitch seemed a little nervous and didn't talk too much to the audience, but he mentioned his double vision and expressed his thankfulness for being able to do anything at all after such a bad accident. They played His Love Takes Hold of Me (again, I'm not sure of the titles); Only Love Will; and they ended with the Lemonade Song with Michael on the washboard. It was funny, Mitch forgot the words in the middle of the song - Rich's influence, I guess!

Ashley Cleveland came on stage next with her pink and purple guitars - she really sounded great, vocally and instrumentally! She sang "He Is" (not sure if that's right), "Henry Doesn't Care", "Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing" and "I Need Jesus". She mentioned she has an album coming out on Tuesday and that she interrupted her laundry schedule to come tonight.

The Ragamuffins came out next, opening the set with a recording of

Rich

playing "Nothing But the Blood", then they went right into Rick singing

"My Deliverer", Mark singing "Surely God is With Us" and Rick singing

"You Did Not Have A Home" (he said they usually end up in a train wreck

on stage during that one - don't know exactly what he meant, but he

played harmonica and guitar at the same time and still sang it right!).

"Hard To Get" was next and an excellent performance of "Man of No Reputation" followed with Michael on accordion and Eric on cello.

Rich took a few minutes to thank everyone for coming and said that this

was one of the toughest and yet most joyous years of his life. He said

that Rich had a simple faith and spent his life investing in others so

that his life was like a rich, warm, complex quilt.

After an encouraging word to support Compassion and a short intermission, the last half of the set included "Somewhere"

(Mark);

"Ready for the Storm" (Jimmy); "The Breaks" (Rick); "Jesus" (Ashley);

"Screen Door" - which got a standing ovation for the cups; "If I Stand"

(Aaron - they messed up the words during this one too - it was funny to

see them all laugh and point at each other); "Calling Out Your Name"

(Mitch); "I See You" and "Awesome God". For the encore, they came back

with "Creed", "Step By Step" and in traditional Rich style, they left

the stage while the audience sang the "Doxology". Rich's "Nothing But

The Blood" on dulcimer closed the show.

A couple of funny things Rick said about Rich: "Most of the stories about Rich we can't repeat" and that he had trouble with electronic things "he could barely turn a lamp on" "I wouldn't let him come near my amp because something would happen to it until he'd walk away, then it would be okay."

I can't believe it's been a year already! I sure miss him!
God Bless,
Patty

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Michael's Lancaster review ***as posted to the [Ragamuffin Mailing List](#)***

Date: Wed, 23 Sep 1998 00:41:40
From: [Michael](#)
Subject: [ragamuffin] el fini

Here is my best recollection of the Ragamuffin show in Lancaster, PA
last Sunday Sept. 20.

THIS TRAIN: I've never heard any of their songs before. If there is one word to describe them, it is fun. Mark is 'hold the gut and laugh" funny. They sang:

I Saw the Light
Mimes of the Old West
A Million Years
Monster Truck

Mark introduced "Monster Truck" as their best attempt at a sentimental love song. He told how he never liked writing love songs about a certain girl because CD technology tends to outlive most relationships, and then everytime you hear the song you are reminded of the relationship..and that because of that truth he feels sorry for Phil Collins. They were introduced as "Riches favorite band". They were very tight and seemed to just be having a blast. What a great warmup. Not really my style of music, but they sure do rock, and what fun!!

MITCH AND THE KID BROTHERS: Wow. Again, I hadn't yet heard Mitch's music either. They played:

Here and Now
Freedom
Take Hold of Me
Only Love Will
Lemonade Song

Of course you could see a little of Rich's influence, maybe we were just looking for it, but also plainly evident were three very talented musicians and the love they share for one another and for their Father. Mitch spoke quickly of being in a bad accident a year ago, one which took Rich's life, how he's glad to be able to do *anything*, how the doctor's say he will *someday* get his complete vision back, how he will *someday* get his voice totally back - but then he said this, and this is one of the things that impacted me most during the day: "...so I

thought I'd just get up here and do what I can...today". What powerful simplicity. Think about it, what more can we do to follow Jesus than that? Powerful words. Eric and Michael are both very talented and they all have fun on stage. I loved the Lemonade Song, had heard so much about it! I think it's important that we don't look to Mitch to carry on what we miss about Rich. As it says in the liner notes of my new favorite CD (this week!), in the "thanks to" part, Mitch thanks "Rich, my friend and teacher". I nearly cried reading that this morning, but it also made me realize that Rich **was** only friend and teacher to Mitch, and that God created Mitch to be Mitch, not Rich. We should all keep that in mind.

ASHLEY CLEVELAND: Double freakin' WOW !! What a great blessing. Ashley was only available for 3 of the 23 shows on this tour, according to Rick later, I'm so glad that Lancaster was one of them! There are no words to capture the raw power of her voice. I was on the edge of tears everytime she opened her mouth - why? - thinking about it later I decided it was because here is such a clear example of something so totally from God. There is no training that produces a voice like hers. I had mentioned in a previous post that I had seen Rich on the Brother's Keeper tour, but couldn't remember much about it. Ashley sang "Henry Doesn't Care" - and it sparked several memories from that show, she had Henry (her son, who is beginning Kindergarten this year) on stage

with

her then. I got to chat with Ashley briefly after the show and she reminded me that Henry was toting a plastic guitar (he must have been

3!) and then I remembered how Henry *jammed* and the crowd went nuts.

Funny, now I remember quite a few more details from that show!! little

blessings!! I don't have a complete song list for Ashley, I don't know

the titles. She mentioned how she and Rich both loved the old hymns,

and two things she would advocate if she were *political* would be 1)

Keeping the old hymns and 2) Burning all commentaries. Hmmm.

Anyway,

Ashley rocked, said she is putting out a "rockin' little record soon", I

for one will get it. Song list:

1. I don't know, but it sure rocked...

2. Come Thou Fountain

3. Repeat of no. 1

4. This may have been titled "I Need Jesus", and yes, it rocked!

RAGAMUFFINS: Reading previous reviews, most mentioned the commanding

stage presence of Rick Elias. It's all true. They opened with My Deliverer, I cried, tried to sing along but couldn't. I wasn't sad,

just overwhelmed. Rick sang and the band played with such power and

passion - it was nearly paralyzing. Tremendous. From TJR they played:

My Deliverer

Surely God Is With Us

Hard to Get

Man of No Reputation

"This one's for Rich", Rick said as he played Man of No Reputation. I love that song, and he performed it beautifully. Rick talked of being blown away by the honesty, confession, bravery, etc of "Hard to Get", that it might be his favorite song on the album. Hey - didn't he say that 'My Deliverer' was his favorite on the TJR radio show? I guess it's true for *every* ragamuffin that each song is one's favorite on a Rich album, no? :)

Rick then gave a talk, mostly about Compassion, but he also said this:
Paraphrasing..."I know that none of you are out here today to see us, but that you're here because of Rich". At first I thought, no, I would be here to see you guys, but then realized that in fact Rick was right. I was there because of Rich, as were we all. Would I ever have known of or seen these guys if not for Rich? Probably not. You know, they were all cool with that too. There was a 15 minute intermission, then he said they would come back and devote the second half of their set to Rich's music, a tribute I guess, but more of a celebration. Each sang a song:

Mark - Somewhere ("I don't know all the words and surely can't sing it in this key", said Mark)

Jimmy - Ready for the Storm

Rick - The Breaks ("first time I heard it it moved the snot out

of me,
literally.", said Rick)
Ashley - Jesus
Mark, Mitch, Aaron & Eric - Screen Door **
Aaron - If I Stand (after reading from Eph. 6, the "armor" part,
cried
again as he sang...)

** A nearly flawless rendition of the "cup thing". Now I had
never seen
it before, it seemed to me that Aaron may have goofed once, not
sure, he
was sure smiling a "I just goofed" kind of smile - regardless,
when they
finished the crowd exploded and we jumped to our feet in unison -
it was
awesome and the guys seemed thrilled. Perhaps it was the first
time
they got it right, again, I'm not sure Aaron goofed! Anyway the
ovation
was such a genuine uproar of love -and the guys were psyched - as
if to
be saying ("YEEEEAAHHH - RICH -WE *DID* IT !!!!!) What fun.

Two commentaries I want to mention. Mark: Mentioned walking
outside
during the intermission and watching a horse in the field nearby
(Lancaster is a small city interwoven with farms!). He said that
horse
seemed like the most beautiful thing to him, then he thought about
why
that was. Answer - "because that horse doesn't know how to do
anything
other than what it was created to do". I heard that one loud and
clear. I guess we are most beautiful when we do what we are
created to
do, bear the image of Christ in the way in which we are uniquely
made
and equipped. And then Rick: He spoke of touring with Rich,
and how

not too long into the tour you get to see the best and worst of everyone, and how they all liked to *get* one another. He said the way to *get* Rich was to put anything electronic in front of him. "The guy could not turn on a light", he said. "He had an aura or magnetic field around him which rendered electronic equipment inoperable" "He was a walking Y2K bug...". Funny.

They finished up with:

Calling Out Your Name - (Michael's dulcimer brought forth more tears)

I See You

Awesome God

Creed

Creed was incredible, it almost seemed like Rick was elevated from the stage. They poured all they had into Creed, there are simply no words to describe it. The crowd sang along, I think at one moment I saw the roof lift off the building, just for a second though...

They walked off stage and then encored with Sometimes By Step, and walked off quietly after starting us in the Doxology.

Afterword, I got to meet everyone as they milled about the lobby.

A

highlight was being able to shake hands with and thank Rick, Mark, Jimmy, and Aaron for finishing the record and for a great show.

They

all seem so nice, as do Mitch, Michael, and Eric. And Ashley too!

I

didn't meet Cobra Joe and Jordan from This Train, so I guess I didn't

meet them all. Oh well.

Some of my friends mentioned how the show gave them a sense of "closure" regarding Rich's death. For me, I think the closure came when I first heard and then got to know The Jesus Record. The concert was a celebration. I didn't feel any different on the 19th, other than being amazed at how fast a year goes by. Rich challenged me to follow Jesus with my all - I'm way far from that, but closer than I know - and Rich's impact on me has been to push me a little closer. Mitch's comment in the liner notes of his CD, thanking "Rich, my friend and teacher" points to the impact we can have on our friends, and the impact our friends can have on us when we allow God to work in those relationships. I know Rich read Thomas Merton's "No Man Is an Island". Indeed.

Peace to you who are Gods,
Michael

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[RichMailList 224]: Chester, MD 10/03 review

↑ kidbrothers.net/rmml/rmml224.html

Date: 16 Oct 1998

To: RichMailList

Subject: [RichMailList 224]: Chester, MD 10/03 review

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Michael Gowen's Jammin' Java review

Date: 05 Oct 98 10:59:45

From: [Michael Gowen](#)

Subject: Ragamuffin review

Hi Dan!--

Just a brief note to let you know that I was one of the fortunate ones to be in attendance at the 2nd of two Ragamuffin concerts last Saturday night at Jammin' Java in Chester (Kent Island), Maryland.

The concert got started with an opening act, and I hope you'll forgive me for not catching her name, but I admit to only coming out to catch the Raggamuffins. She played piano and sang a set of 5 original tunes accompanied by her drummer.

After a brief delay to fix some sound problems, Rick, Mark, Jimmy, Aaron, Michael and Carl took the stage and immediately launched into My

Deliverer, which was followed by Surely God is With Us. Rick took a moment out to explain that the band had no sleep the previous night and had already performed one set for the 6:30 crowd. But the sleep deprivation didn't effect the performance at all, and if anything added to the spirit and especially the humor of the evening...Rick and Mark trading friendly jabs at one another all night long.

Anyhow, I'm afraid I wasn't taking notes, but the band performed (not necessarily in this order) Hard to Get, You Did Not Have a Home, Man of no Reputation (beautiful!); Hold me Jesus (inviting us to sing along), If I Stand (introduced by Aaron reading Scripture, and again inviting us to sing along); Here in America (Rick remembered that Rich used to have them practice and practice songs that they wouldn't necessarily get to perform in concert, this one falling into that category and also a band favorite); Sometimes by Step and Calling Out Your Name.

After a brief plug for Compassion International, Rick got everyone on their feet for a closing sing-a-long consisting of I See You, Awesome God and an extended high-energy version Creed.

Rick promised everyone a worship service during his introductions...and that it was. Awesome experience.

In Christ,
Michael

Suzy Dixon's Jammin' Java review - ([w/pics](#) - [updated 05 Jul 99](#))

Date: Fri, 16 Oct 1998 10:24:43

From: [Suzy Dixon](#)

Subject: Kent Island (Chester MD) Homeless Man concert

Danl,

I was one of the 150 people privileged to see the Homeless Man concert at Jammin Java on Kent Island. The Ragamuffins did two sets, I went to the first one at 6:30pm. What a great experience. I went to their Lancaster PA concert two weeks before this one which was held in a big concert hall (5000 people I'm guessing). I told Rick Elias later that that one was with family, this one was with friends (Julie and Wayne Johnson from Bowie MD). The Lancaster concert was a very good concert but a little impersonal. Jammin Java seats 150 people. What a difference and what an evening! I felt like I was sitting in someone's family room watching the Ragamuffins.

A local artist opened the concert, I can't remember her name but she was pretty good. I was hoping to see This Train and Mitch McVicker perform but I know there was limited time for each set so they weren't part of this concert date. And besides, I've see them twice since July, once in Wichita and again in Lancaster PA. Anyway, the evening was

haunted by
problems with the sound system. Jordan Richter was running the
sound
that night and seemed to be very frustrated. Mark said later that
Jordan isn't very happy when he has to run sound. The Rags
started
their set with "My Deliverer", and then "Surely God is With Us".
Rick
explained that they were all tired from their travel itinerary.
Flew to
New York, drove down to Kent Island (I think that is about a 4
hour
drive), set up, perform two sets, take down, (I think there was a
couple
radio interviews in there), then drive back to New York the next
day.
They had to get there by 1:30pm for a radio interview. They
performed
several songs from the Jesus Record, Hard to Get, You Did Not have
a
Home, and Rick sang Man of No Reputation (Mesmerizing!) Rick
talked
about being on tour with Rich and how Rich would give them a list
of 35
songs to learn just a couple days before the tour started. Then
he'd
(Rich) would take a lot of them out of the line up. One of the
songs
Rich cut was "Here in America" which Rick said was one of the
band's
favorites. So they did "Here in America". By the way, also one of
my
personal favorites! Aaron sang "If I Stand" after reading a
passage
from the Bible. Jimmy Abegg led on Calling Out Your Name. They
also
did Sometimes by Step.

Rick took some time to talk about Compassion and how important
that

organization was to Rich. He encouraged everyone to get some of the literature out on the table and consider sponsoring a kid or supporting the Native American projects.

After that they performed several crowd favorites. We were invited to stand and sing along which I think everyone did. They/we :-) did I See You, Awesome God and Creed.

Between sets, in the store part of Jammin Java, Rick, Mark, Aaron, and Jimmy were signing autographs, selling t-shirts and talking to everyone.

I talked to Jimmy about his artwork on "Exodus" which I love. He said he really liked it too. I also asked him if he was the "Jimmy A" that Sammy Horner of The Electrics was going to hang out with when he was dead and gone. He just grinned and said "Yes" then explained that they had toured together a couple years ago in Scotland. As we were leaving, Rick was walking out at the same time. I said to him "I loved you.... in "That Thing You Do". I think I kind of scared him in my delivery of that statement. We stood outside talking about the concert, how messed up the sound was, and how tired he was of the weather in Nashville. He said at one point he was wondering what a particular noise was and looked down at his guitar and realized that noise was him.

A couple minutes later Mark came out and joined in the conversation,

then Jimmy Abegg came out. This was an opportunity I couldn't pass up so I asked if I could take a picture of them. (I had been taking pictures all evening without permission! ha ha) They graciously said yes and I got a really nice picture of all of them except Aaron. Then they let me take a picture of myself with them. Danl, wait until you see this picture. It's hilarious!!

Hope this was slightly coherent! The whole evening was a gift from God in an otherwise messed up year! What a blessing. I'm still smiling! Especially with I look at THAT picture! You'll see.

See ya, Suzy from Washington DC

Suzy's Jammin' Java Scrapbook - updated 05 Jul 99

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[RichMailList 228]: Cincinnati, OH 10/24 reviews

↑ kidbrothers.net/rmml/rmml228.html

Date: 04 Nov 1998

To: RichMailList

Subject: [RichMailList 228]: Cincinnati, OH 10/24 reviews

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Devin DelGrosso's Cincinnati review

From: [Devin DelGrosso](#)

Date: Sun, 25 Oct 1998 13:59:33 EST

Subject: Lakota Christian Church Concert

Hey Dan'l,

Everyone has basically said everything there is to say about this concert, so I'm just going to give a quick overview.

This Train was extremely funny, and good. It made me want to get their album, and that's amazing because I didn't like them before I heard them live.

Mitch McVicker was great as well. He still sounds okay, and he said the thing about the crowd looking much bigger to him. The thing most people have overlooked during this set, is Eric Hauck. They are all wonderful musicians, but Eric can play the cello like no one I've ever seen before (and I really don't like the cello). It was amazing!!! If you go make sure you watch him.

After the concert, I told him I thought he was extremely good at the cello, and he said that was because everyone else was playing and I just

couldn't

hear his mistakes. So he still remains humble.

The Ragamuffins were.....unbelievably great. They did all the same songs

as mentioned before, and added That Where I Am There You May Also Be. It was

only the second time they've played it, but didn't mess up once.

Jimmy A was

not feeling well, and Mark Robertson said that tonight Jimmy's speeches are

brought to you by TheraFlu. The crowds started singing along throughout the

second half of concert, and it turned out to be the best two and a half hours

of worship I have ever attended. If you haven't been to a concert yet, you

NEED to go.

Grace be with you,

Devin DelGrosso

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Bro. Bob Roggenbuck's Cincinnati review

Date: Sun, 25 Oct 1998 08:13:08

Subject: Cincinnati concert

From: [Robert M Roggenbuck](#)

Hey,

Despite local reports, tickets were available at the door for the Homeless Man concert last night near Cincinnati.

The concert, as you might expect, was great. I've been a fan of Rich for

years and have seen him a number of times. I was wondering if that would

somehow make this event a bit of a disappointment. I'm glad that wasn't

the case. Of course, remembering Rich is rather sad but it's a little easier to handle after seeing his friends carry on. (Both on the stage and off...) I suppose it's a bit like therapy...

I didn't keep exact notes of the show. However, This Train opened up the evening with their typical flare and volume. I think their greatest contribution is just in terms of fun. Mitch and The Kid Brothers did the next bit. (Personally, my favorite part of the evening...) Mitch's voice still sounds a little rough but it was obvious that the audience couldn't have cared less. He mentioned the double vision and singing voice problems that he's having and noted that they are improving and are predicted to return to normal with time. (I'm certain our prayers would be a bit of a help as well...) It was just amazing to see him up on a stage after hearing the reports of what he's had to endure this past year. Finally, the Ragamuffins took the stage and did a number of songs off of the Jesus record. Hard To Get and Man Of No Reputation were especially moving. They gave a good plug for Compassion and made it clear that they hoped Rich's legacy would live on through the generosity of his fans. After a brief intermission, they concluded the evening with old Rich "favorites." This was the least like a concert and most like a worship service. The crowd participated and God was glorified in "the praise of His people..." Songs included Awesome God, Step by Step,

Creed, If I Stand, Screen Door, and other classics.

I am a Dominican friar (big white habit and all...) and we share a number of elements of our spirituality with Franciscans (Dominic and Francis are believed to have met in Rome during the founding of their "friar movements" in the 13th century.) and I couldn't help but let my imagination get the best of me at moments last evening. I could see Rich and St. Francis looking down from heaven, lemonade glasses in hand, and laughing and singing and joining their praise of the Father with ours...

Eternal rest grant unto him oh Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon him. Amen.

Yours in Christ,
Bro. Bob Roggenbuck

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Vickie Westbrook's Cincinnati review as posted to the [Ragamuffin Mailing List](#)

From: [Vickie Westbrook](#)
Subject: [ragamuffin] Cincy Concert
Date: Mon, 26 Oct 1998 12:52:14 PST

Hi Everyone,

There is a lot that could be said about the concert in Cincinnati on Saturday night. Most of it would be a repeat of what you have read in most of the other concert reviews, so I won't go into that. What impressed me was not the music(although it was truly wonderful and I

think I enjoyed it live even more than on the Jesus Record itself)...

it was the spirit of the performance. The Ragamuffins made a point of telling us that they were doing it for us, the audience and fans. Their sincerity came through. They seemed to delight in audience response and participation. The last portion of the concert was the part for us to all sing along to our favorite Rich songs, which we did with more than heart-felt enthusiasm.

I was totally taken with the guys themselves. Mark was his usual "funny man" self but there was a depth that I had not seen before. Rick took on his roll as the "head king pin" with assurance. There were times when it could be seen that he was overtaken with emotion but he still managed to do his curled Elvis lip for us a couple of times! Aaron showed a spirit of gentleness and Jimmy a firmness in his faith.

And joy....! I have never seen such a spirit of joy as I saw on the faces of The Kid Brothers, Erik and Michael. (Girls, it's not just Michael's smile that does it; it is something more!) Sometimes it was like that joy could not be contained and it burst off their faces towards God.

It was wonderful to see Mitch again. What a testimony to God's love and providence! I think Mitch knows it, too. I am not sure if his full voice has returned but it did sound good. What impressed me more was the emotion that was behind it. He sang as a man with a new understanding of

the God that he serves.

Mitch's sense of humor is also beginning to shine. He told us a couple of stories about being in the hospital. Funny! It seems that after coming out of the coma, he couldn't speak for a while. He was given paper and pencil to communicate with. I wont tell you what were the first words he wrote for those anxiously waiting. I wouldn't want to spoil the fun for those going to any upcoming concerts.

What I saw that night were a group of men who had been broken and put back together anew. Not that the process is all done. God is still healing and filling and making them into men who are falling more and more in love with Him. I think that the same thing was happening for those sitting in the seats. I know it was in my heart.

Vickie

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Sharon Frazier's Cincinnati pictures

Click here, <http://members.aol.com/Geoffr4646/pics1.htm>, for pictures of the Cincinnati concert by [Sharon Frazier](#) posted on the [Ragamuffin Mailing List Page](#)

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Tim Francis' South Bend review as posted to the Ragamuffin Mailing List

↑ kidbrothers.net/rmml/rmml229.html

Date: 04 Nov 1998

To: RichMailList

Subject: [RichMailList 229]: South Bend, IN 10/25 review

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Subject: [ragamuffin] South Bend Concert

From: [Tim Francis](#)

Date: Mon, 26 Oct 1998 21:07:36 EST

It was a cool, crisp, autumn evening. The moon was a sliver of silver as it hung over the campus of St. Mary's College and shone on the flocks of ragamuffins making their way to see their band at O'Laughlin Auditorium in South Bend, Indiana.

The night began at about ten minutes after 7 pm when This Train took the stage. Mark Robertson, with shoes as red as his bass, warned that sometimes they were accused of playing too loud. So they decided to start off with an old hymn. They proceeded to rock the house with I Saw the Light. Jordan had to make several volume adjustments to get things up to the usual This Train sound level, but by the time his lead rolled around he was wailing, doing his trademark split while cranking out a

flawless, screaming lead. Next up was Mimes of the Old West. Mark said they made 2 critical errors with this particular song. One was they figured there were only 4 or 5 mimes in the country. The other was that anyone who goes around in public wearing black tights has a sense of humor. But it seems there are thousands and they don't seem to have a sense of humor about this song. Mark introduced the next song as a song that was very special to them. He said they never used to play it live because the lyrics were so heartfelt and sensitive that it underminded everything else they did! Then they played a beautiful rendition of a song Mark co-wrote with Rich Mullins : A Million Years. Keeping with the sensitive theme, as Mark said, they closed with Monster Truck. Mark's well meant, but failed proposal to a past girl friend. Classic This Train!

After a break of less than 5 minutes Mark came back out to introduce Mitch McVicker and the Kid Brothers of Saint Frank. He talked briefly about the accident and about losing Rich, and how we almost lost Mitch. He shared that Mitch is a walking miracle and a testimony to God's grace. It is a miracle that Mitch can stand and breathe, let alone play music and sing. I would have to agree. God is awesome.

Mitch opened with a different version of Here and Now. A conga intro

laced with acoustic guitar licks and a few pauses and time changes during the song that were not part of the CD version. It was great. Then with Eric Hauck on the cello and Michael Aukofer on the hammered dulcimer they played Freedom. (Another great cut from Mitch's CD released independently this past summer) Next up was Take Hold of Me on which Mitch broke a string right at the beginning, but he was still able to pull off a good version of the song. Mitch then put his guitar down and picked up Rick Elias's guitar saying, "I hope Rick doesn't mind if I play his guitar. It's a lot nicer than the one I got.....It has more strings." After the laughter subsided, Mitch added, "...but more strings gives me a chance to make more errors." When Mitch introduced Eric and Michael I noticed that Eric had on the same racing T-shirt that he bought in Indy the first week of September. It was at that show they joked of changing clothes every couple of weeks or so. And I wondered..... Mitch closed with that stupid little profound song we all love, The Lemonade Song. Michael did a great job of punctuating Mitch's rhythm with the washboard and a tin can.

After another very short break the Raggamuffin band came out on stage and Rich's haunting hammered dulcimer echoed through the hall playing Nothing But the Blood of Jesus from the Jesus Record. The Raggamuffins

opened

with My Deliverer which instantly had everyone on their feet where they

remained for sometime until Rick Elias suggested they sit down so they

don't wear themselves out. Mark Robertson took the lead on the next

song, Surely God Is With Us. Then Rick and Mark shared vocals on You Did

Not Have a Home. Mark spoke of remembering playing at the auditorium

with Rich in the Fall of 95. Rick couldn't remember the things the

others did. Mark, in mock jealousy prodded, "That's because you had to

leave the tour and go off and make a movie with Mr. Tom Hanks!"

After

further joking with the crowd Rick stepped back and introduced the next

song with all kidding aside. It was Hard To Get. This song brought

tears to some eyes. The version we heard that night was unlike anything

I've ever heard. It really stood out for me. There was sort of a breathtaking, heavenly, airiness that seemed to grip me

throughout that

song. It is difficult to explain. The Kid Brothers came back out and

joined the Raggamuffins as Rick sang Man of No Reputation. There was

then another short break.

During the break a table and some plastic cups were carried out and, upon

return, Mark, Mitch, Aaron, and Eric did the "cup thing" for screen door.

Eric lost a cup, but quickly scooped it up and fell right back into

step. Rick said, "It's kind of like one of those old Johnny Carson

monologues. The more they mess it up the better it is." Then the Raggamuffins picked up their other instruments and with Michael Aukofer on the accordion they opened the second set with Here in America. Rick couldn't hit the high notes and after wondering aloud how Rich was able to hit those. But he said "that's the beauty of being a raggamuffin, you don't have to apologize for stinking." Jimmy Abeg then announced that we were going to have church from here on out. The crowd then helped Jimmy sing through Hold Me Jesus. It was beautiful. Eric did a great job on the cello on that song too. It was strange to hear these songs with the Raggamuffins and without Rich. Yet the empty hole that Rich left seemed to fill with the presence of God. Again, this is difficult to put into the words we use here on earth. After the band was introduced Aaron came out from behind the drums and sang "If I Stand". As the intro played Aaron quoted scripture and then sang straight from his heart. He was so into the song his body moved as if he was playing the drums a bit while singing. This was also a very moving time. Mitch came out to help with backing vocals on that one and took the lead on the next song. As Michael hit the beginning notes on the hammered dulcimer I knew we were in for a real treat. Mitch did a great job on Calling Out Your Name. Really making it his own I thought. Aaron then pounded out the intro to I See You while Aukofer ran backstage to get his sticks. The

audience

echoed back the lyrics and Jimmy A. flew on guitar. I thought I was going to see him lift right up off the stage. Next came the anthem.

Mark Robertson (and everyone else) sang Awesome God. Then Rick shouted and screamed his beliefs with us on I Believe. The Raggamuffins left

the stage and then came back out and did a song Mark said they never even attempted as a full band before. He said Indy was the victim of the

rehearsal. Referring to That Where I Am There You ... Sure to become a

classic praise song, if it isn't already. Rick took the time to keep the

song going and teach us this one, although many were familiar with it.

The audience then helped Rick through Sometimes by Step. And they closed

the concert with a prayerful rendition of the Doxology as they left the

stage one by one with Jimmy A. lingering in the blue light at the end.

I was impressed by the unity I saw among the bands and their humbleness

of heart. Before my wife and I could get down from the balcony Mitch and

Mark were already out at the tables patiently signing autographs. While

Mark signed my CD I heard him explain to someone why he was without his

stand up bass. He played only electric bass all night. He said he kind

of broke it and it's being glued back together again. That's my third

bass this year he said, seeming surprised himself. During the show Mark

talked about how this tour started of as something for the fans,
but it
had for them, turned into an experience of falling in love with
God all
over again. As we drove home we felt that we had been brought
closer to
God and we thanked Him for His goodness.

Tim Francis

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[RichMailList 230f]: Elgin, IL 11/08 reviews

↑ kidbrothers.net/rmml/rmml230f.html

Date: 22 Nov 1998

To: RichMailList

Subject: [RichMailList 230f]: Elgin, IL 11/08 reviews

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[Jennifer Bieritz's review](#)

[Gina Blanchette's review](#)

Date: Mon, 09 Nov 1998 09:14:55

From: [Jennifer Bieritz](#)

Subject: Homeless Man Tour - Elgin, Illinois

Good morning Dan'l!

Saw the Homeless Man tour last night (sold out show) in Elgin, Illinois.

Ditto what everyone has said about this concert. I'll just share a few

additional thoughts. This Train was great, and I will definitely buy

their CD. I always liked Million Years From Now and never knew they

sang it. Absolutely loved Mimes of the Old West. They closed their set

with that sappy love song, Monster Truck.

Other than Canticle I had never heard Mitch before. Other folks have

said his voice is not as strong as it was, but I certainly couldn't tell. If it is, he more than makes up for it with the conviction with

which he sings. By the way, it was Mitch's 26th birthday, and we all sang Happy Birthday to him. Eric is great on cello (thanks for the heads-up). Michael played everything from a popcorn tin to the hammer dulcimer. Amazing. Loved the Lemonade Song.

The Ragamuffins were awesome. They did Nothing is Beyond You, and Rick

Elias mentioned this is only the fourth time they've performed it in

concert. Nothing against Amy, but I really preferred Rick's rendition.

The second half of their set, Rick said we were going to do church. Wish I could attend that church every Sunday. Unbelievable.

Everyone

joined in on If I Stand, Creed, Sometimes by Step, I See You, That Where

I Am . . . They said they'll be touring again in the spring, and I hope

they never stop.

Peace,

Jennifer Bieritz

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From: [Gina Blanchette](#)

Date: Mon, 9 Nov 1998 16:22:59

Subject: [[ragamuffin](#)] Elgin Concert

The Elgin Concert on Sunday was incredible -- bottom line I think the

bands had a good time. The audience definitely did. The Ragamuffins

did "Nothing is Beyond You" and "That Where I Am . . ." which are recent additions to their show. We sang "Happy Birthday" to Mitch twice.

The Elgin show was an emotional one for the bands (sorry Steve!).

I
won't go into it except to say they were in the midst of a lot of
memories being in Elgin which is old This Train stomping grounds,
site of the Roswell East studio, and the location of the church
where
Rich taped the demos. This Train naturally had a lot of support
from
the locals. When Mitch came on he was well-received. After his
first song someone started a round of "Happy Birthday." He got a
standing ovation for being there after he spoke about the accident,
losing Rich and how he's coming along. Mitch's voice sounded
great,
but he still says it isn't what it was. Someone brought a cake
with
candles blazing and Eric presented it to Mitch who was sung to a
second time. Then he blew out the candles and tried to make a
sound
on the harmonica at the same time, for which he received more
applause. It was very cool to share in his impromptu birthday
celebration. He said he'd split the cake 500 ways if someone would
volunteer to cut it.

When the Ragamuffins came on it was hard for them to get a sense of
what was going on with their audience because they couldn't see us.
They mentioned a couple of times that they really needed us to be
there tonight. After a couple songs they knew we were and
things started falling into place. News from Rick is that they're
touring again this Spring with additional songs -- and they plan to
come back to Elgin. When they came back after intermission to do
Rich songs and the lighting was brought up on the audience things
couldn't have gone better. It was such a powerful time -- great
musicianship and spirit on their part and a grateful, receptive
audience -- and both playing off each other to God's glory.

The evening brought back memories of why Rich's songs never were
just
songs -- JimmyA talked about that, too. Each one of Rich's songs
showed a different facet of Jesus. I had almost forgotten that we
always seemed to be praying when we were at one of Rich's concerts,
praying through the songs. I was grateful that that hadn't

changed.

The Ragamuffins are picking up the dance just fine.

I didn't get to talk to the Ragamuffins afterwards 'cause I had to leave for home quicker than I originally planned and I missed meeting

a couple people on the list. I talked with Mitch and then gave him the e-mails and a hug and thanked him for being there. He was selling his own CDs and tapes -- I let him know that his CD is really, really good! Then I had to leave. I hope the others from the mailing list got to talk to the rest of the band and will report

in, especially with any other news or prayer requests.

God's blessings,

Gina

gblanch@olivet.edu

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St. Paul, Minnesota Concert Review

↑ kidbrothers.net/reviews/stpaul.html

Daniel Boucek

My seven year old son, summed up the concert by saying, "Dad this is the greatest!" It was only proper for me to take him to see the Ragamuffins et al for his first concert.

Mitch McVicker and the Ragamuffins visited the Northwestern Book Store (Har Mar Mall), in Roseville, MN at about 3:45 p.m. Mitch sang a few songs (He said he had over 50 songs to choose from and decided to sing a couple that he wasn't going to sing at the concert) and spoke to those in attendance. Dave Mullins and Alyssa Loukota shared about their involvement in the ministry, Kid Brothers of St. Frank. The usual question and answer session followed. When asked what the Ragamuffins planed to do after The Jesus Record, Rick Elias said they intend to work on another album together.

At about 7:30 p.m. on November 14, 1998, The Homeless Man: A Tribute to Rich Mullins featuring the Ragamuffin Band, This Train, Mitch McVicker and the Kid Brothers of St. Frank, along with special guests David Mullins and Alyssa Loukota graced Benson Great Hall on the campus of Bethel College and Seminary in St. Paul, MN. This Train led off the program with an energetic set of tunes from their "Mimes of the Old West" album. Mark Robertson's humor and unique playing style on the upright bass helped to break the ice.

Mitch McVicker and the Kid Brothers (Michael Aukofer and Eric Hauck) were next on stage. Mitch spoke a little about how he is still recovering from the accident. He commented that he has double vision - which made the audience of 1600 look like it were 3200! Mitch said somehow his voice was also impacted by the accident and has yet to fully recuperate and return to normal. What a talented trio - Mitch played guitar and harmonica, Eric played the cello and bass guitar, and Michael played the congas, washboard, and anything else he could get his hands on. Mitch and others were clearly touched by their visit to Elgin, Illinois earlier this month - he and others in the entourage made comments (on and off stage) how it was

a very emotional visit since it was the last time many of the band members saw Rich Mullins.

After the Ragamuffins performed about a half dozen songs from The Jesus Record they introduced Dave Mullins and Alyssa Loukota who a little talked about Rich Mullins and the ministry of the Kid Brothers of St. Frank. The last segment of the concert was devoted to Rich Mullins songs. After the first two songs everyone remained on their feet until the encore - "That Where I Am, There You" followed by the doxology. (Dave, Alyssa, Marita, and Kathy came on stage for the last couple of songs)

Also in attendance were some of Rich's friends, Marita Meinerts, who opened up the concert, and Kathy Sprinkle. Jim Chaffee from Myrrh Records was also seen. There were others, not known to me, from Nashville who came up for what was supposed to be the last tour for the year. However, two additional Minnesota dates followed.

What a worship event!

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Jacksonville, FL 01/29 & Sarasota, FL 1/30 reviews

↑ kidbrothers.net/rmml/rmml232.html

Date: 21 Feb 1999

To: RichMailList

Subject: [RichMailList 232]: Jacksonville, FL 01/29 & Sarasota, FL 1/30 reviews

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 - [Kathleen Curzon's Jacksonville & Sarasota review](#)
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Sandy Yesnick's Jacksonville & Sarasota review

Date: Fri, 05 Feb 1999 13:13:00

Subject: Ragamuffins concert review

From: [Sandy Yesnick](#)

RAGAMUFFIN CONCERT REVIEW

by Sandy Yesnick

On Saturday and Sunday, January 30 and 31, I had the privilege of seeing the Ragamuffins in concert at Sarasota Baptist Church in Sarasota, Florida. The Saturday night concert sold out (800 tickets) in just five days, so our local radio station (WJIS 88.1 FM) added a 2:00 p.m. concert on Sunday, which also was nearly sold out.

It was everything I'd ever dreamed it would be and more. Although the concerts were a tribute to Rich Mullins, the praise was directed toward Jesus Christ--the One who made Rich all he was and the One

who
is making us all in His image.

Rick told us that if we scream, we need to do it loudly;
otherwise,
they won't hear us with their new ear plugs. I don't know how
much
they heard, but it got pretty loud at times!

The concert opened with "My Deliverer," which Rick Elias sang with
great passion, followed by "Surely God Is With Us." Rick said we
were
a great audience, but is it OK if we stand up and dance? Someone
said, "This is a Baptist church," to which Mark Robertson quipped,
"That just means you can't drink beer!"

The next song was "You Did Not Have A Home." It was fun, with
almost
everyone clapping and singing along.

Before doing "Hard To Get," Rick told of going to Window Rock to
see
Rich about a week before he was killed. He said Rich knew that
Rick
can walk down any street or alley at any time of the day or night
and
no one will bother him, but put him in the middle of a field and
he is
paralyzed with fear. But Rick said he's glad he went. About
halfway
through the song, I felt tears start to well up in my eyes, so I
had
to stop listening to the words before they spilled out. It was
all
very moving.

Next, Jimmy Abegg and Mark did "Boy Like Me, Man Like You." Jimmy
admitted that he uses a "cheat sheet" because he is no good at
memorizing things. Rick sat back with silly grin on his face,
just

waiting for Jimmy to mess up so he could laugh at him. It was so funny! The audience helped with the whistling in the middle and end of the song.

Then the sanctuary was darkened and a single green light shone on Rick as began "The Color Green," followed by "Nothing Is Beyond You," which, Rick admitted, he "can't sing as pretty as Amy." He then did what Mark said was probably Rich's favorite worship song: "Man of No Reputation." Hearing that song on the CD is one thing; listening to it live is another. I believe Rich was right when he said no one could sing that song except its writer. The depth of emotions it stirs can only be brought fully out by the one who penned it.

Aaron Smith came down from the drums for the final song of the first set: "If I Stand." It was beautiful. The audience stood and sang along. I appreciated the Scripture he quoted about "taking the helmet of salvation ... that we may be able to stand."

The next half of the concert opened with Mark, Jimmy, Aaron, and Carl Herrgasell (the new keyboardist) doing "Screen Door," along with the cup choreography. Mark admitted that, no matter what combination of guys they use, they've never done it perfectly. And this weekend was no different. Jimmy messed up Saturday night, and Mark did it wrong on Sunday. Rick said he liked their version because he didn't have to do it! It was really something special to see, and, in spite of their

mistakes, they got a standing ovation at both concerts.

Next, Rick sang "Here In America" (one of my personal favorites), Mark
did "Somewhere," and the audience stood and helped out with "Sing
Your
Praise To The Lord."

Rick introduced Carl, who recently began traveling with them, and Carl
sang "Elijah." It was awesome, and he got a standing ovation.

Before singing "Hold Me, Jesus," Jimmy asked the audience to sing
along with him. He said, "If you don't know the words, just make
them
up. That's what I do!"

Rick and Mark then sang "Peace," Rick did "Calling Out Your Name,"
and
the audience helped by singing the responses on "I See You."
Again,
I've seen something like that done on a video, but it's a whole
different experience being there. I was singing it the rest of
the
weekend.

The set ended with "Creed." What a song! The crescendo kept
building
until Rick got to the lines "I believe in the resurrection; I
believe
in life that never ends." There's no way to describe the power I
felt
as Rick shouted those words in song. It reminds us that death is
NOT
the end. Rich, and others we've loved and lost through death, are
not
gone forever. We WILL meet them again some sweet day, and we'll
also
meet those whose paths we wish had crossed ours in this life.

After a standing ovation, the Ragamuffins came out for an encore, during which they taught us "That Where I Am . . ." (men sang one part, women sang another). They closed with "Sometimes By Step" and "Doxology."

If the Ragamuffins come your way, it is well worth the money to see them. They are honest and open about their faults and failures. They may not always sing the lyrics just right and occasionally will break a guitar string, but I personally believe you won't find a better band--or a nicer group of guys--in all the world.

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Kathleen Curzon's Jacksonville & Sarasota review as posted to the [Ragamuffin Mailing List](#)

Date: Sat, 06 Feb 1999 13:44:35
From: [Kathleen Curzon](#)
Subject: [ragamuffin] HMT Concert Review

I had the incredible blessing of being able to attend both the Fri night concert in Jacksonville, FL, and the Sunday afternoon one in Sarasota, FL. As far as the performance was concerned, the two were nearly identical. But the flavor of the two concerts, and my own personal contact with the band, was completely different at each venue. At both concerts, in the usual Ragamuffin style, the guys nonchalantly practiced and dealt with last minute details right there in front of us. They are, as y'all know, down to earth. They opened the first set with a recording of Rich's dulcimer which led

them into "My Deliverer." Then they played "Surely God is with Us," after Rick re-tuned, commenting that maybe it was more authentic out of tune. "You Didn't Have a Home" followed. Then Mark spoke about how they had just about convinced Rich that he should do TJR vocals, but as usual Rich wound up getting his way. So they were just keeping up their end of the bargain. He also said that there was one song on TJR that Rich refused to sing, Rich said its writer needed to sing it. And since its writer happened to be here, they would go ahead and sing, "Man of No Reputation." Next Mark sang "Somewhere," and Rick followed with "Nothing is Beyond You." Rick "apologized" ahead of time for this one, commenting that Amy G. was alot easier on the eyes and ears than he is. I don't know that I agree... Someone among them said that for the Spring tour, they had learned some new songs. Mark amended that comment, saying that they had added new songs, but not necessarily LEARNED them. Yep, Mark was right. It was endearing to note the times that lyrics were forgotten, somehow so familiar and human. Jimmy said Rich's songs were amazing, and that they'd played them for years, and yet somehow he never learned the lyrics. Poetic justice, he figured. Until this point at the Jacksonville concert, I felt a weird flatness. I couldn't tell if it was something the band was experiencing, or whether it was just the sadness I felt in hearing Rich's music, but not hearing him. I think that being the first concert after a 9 week

break,
maybe the guys were just re-adjusting. And there seemed to be a lot of
teens who had this "concert excitement" that sometimes seemed out of
place. You could just tell they didn't really know much about Rich and
the Rags. God bless 'em for their enthusiasm, but it just stood out to
me.
Well, then Rick explained about visiting Rich at Window Rock the week
before his accident. He said Rich was SO excited about TJR project. He
said Rich knew he was a city boy who would be "paralyzed" if he found
himself in a meadow, so Rich made sure he worked it out that Rick would
have to come to Window Rock to discuss TJR. In this place in the middle
of nowhere, Rick sat with Rich in the one-room hogan Rich built with his
own hands. Rick sat dumbfounded as he listened to the most articulate
song about doubt and struggle in a Christian's life that he had ever
heard.
Needless to say, Rick followed this story with "Hard to Get." Then Rick said the next song was one he and most of the band hated. But
for whatever reason, Rich liked it and would force them to play it. Now
since Rich is gone, Rick has come to like "Sing Your Praise to the Lord." Of course they did the longer (and IMHO much better) version of
the song. It was at this point in the Jacksonville concert that everyone seemed to relax and just worship.
After an intermission, the table and cups were rolled out. What a blast, I'll never get tired of watching "Screen Door on a

Submarine."

According to Mark, they have performed this song at least 300 times, with many different combinations of people. He said by far, this is the

worst combination. If it was, we didn't know any better. Mark, Jimmy,

Carl, and Aaron stepped up to the cups with fearless anticipation, and

proceeded to whip that number to a standing ovation.

(Oh, BTW, that's Carl Herrgesell, known to the band as the Junior Ragamuffin, and wonderfully gifted on the keyboards and vocals.)

Next they played "Here in America," which Rick said they never played

live with Rich. They followed that with Rick's favorite Rich song: "Elijah." Carl offered that touching solo.

Then Aaron took front stage, and recited the portion of Ephesians 6 that

calls us to stand in the full armor of God. He sang "If I Stand" with

heartfelt simplicity and conviction.

Somewhere in here, Jimmy said in case we didn't know, we're havin' church.

Jimmy picked up the pennywhistle, and they were off into a soulful version of "The Color Green." Rick took a moment to reflect on the fact

that Rich was the most profound example of all that it is to be human,

to be on this planet, and to be a man of faith.

Next, Jimmy sang "Hold Me Jesus." Then it seems to me (my memory fails

me) that Rick did lead vocals on "Peace of Christ," "Calling Out Your

Name," "I See You" (I DO remember we sang along to this), "Awesome God"

(even the babies were rockin' to this), and "Creed."

Rick and the crowd sang especially loud when we got to "I believe in the

RESURRECTION, I believe in a life that NEVER ENDS," at which point, I

for one could not hold back tears.
They then left the stage, tho' we all knew no one was quite ready to
call it quits.
When the band came back, they sang "That Where I Am" -- Carl has
this
great falsetto that led out with the ladies' part.
Then, a most wonderful gift: Rick spoke a length about Rich. How
after
he died, everyone got together and laughed alot and cried a bit.
They
walked around with these little TJR demo cassettes. How he misses
Rich
now just about every day. That none of the band wants to deify
Rich, he
was nowhere near perfect. Rick: "Heck, we used to joke with him
that if
anyone really got to know him, they wouldn't invite him for
dinner, let
alone buy his albums." :)
Yet, in spite the fact that Rich had become incredibly successful
in
CCM, his belongings when he died were packed up in the back of a
UHaul.
He had given it all away.
The band wrapped up both evenings with us singing "Step by Step"
and the
Doxology, which we sang alone after they walked offstage. Though
words
leave me unsatisfied in describing the experience, it was
powerful.
After the Jacksonville concert, I gave Jimmy the booklet of all
our
prayers and well-wishes. He said he couldn't wait to read it --
he
subscribes to the list, but usually doesn't have time to read any
of
it. But I knew he would make time to read the booklet.
Sure enough, after the Sarasota concert, he told me how much they

all
loved the booklet, that it was awesome. I don't think I'd go that far,
but I was happy that we were able to minister to them a little. After the Sarasota concert, there was an air of completion and relaxation after a very busy weekend. The guys just hung out and were
so gracious to answer questions and sign autographs. This was probably
just as meaningful to me as the concert itself. We took pictures (I'll
send some if you guys want), and laughed alot. I asked Mark to describe
the Rich he knew in a nutshell (knowing what a ridiculous impossibility
that would be). He said, "In a nutshell? He was a nut, in a nutshell."
And went on to tell me Rich was the best Christian he ever met. Was
everything everyone is, only MORE. How he had the worst temper, and was
the most generous.
Jimmy told me a funny story of a time they were eating at a church before a concert. Something awful had been added to the main course.
Everyone there graciously tried to avoid eating it. Everyone but Rich,
who chowed it down and went on for seconds. Either he was oblivious
("He was weird with food -- he ate ANYTHING in huge quantities"), or
outrageously gracious.
Then, we talked about Window Rock. How he felt Rich was realizing he
did more good for the the Rez by leaving to raise money with his music,
than to live there and become entrenched in the details of local life.
Jimmy sensed he was planning to move back to maybe Chicago. He mentioned how uncomfortable Rich was here on this planet. And

he
said finally that if there is anyone's passing we can truly
celebrate,
it is Rich's. It's what Rich longed for.

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Review of the Homeless Man Tour in St Louis, 4/16/1999 as posted to the Ragamuffin Mailing List by Robin Woodson

↑ kidbrothers.net/rmml/rmml235.html

Date: 25 Apr 1999

To: RichMailList

Subject: [RichMailList 235]: St Louis, MO 04/16 review

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From: [Robin Woodson](#)

Subject: [ragamuffin] Homeless Man Tour - St. Louis

Date: Sat, 17 Apr 1999 18:48:33

Hey guys,

I didn't arrive as early as I had planned, just five minutes before the show. We found some seats in a pretty cruddy location. Since the show hadn't started, I told my friend that I was going back to look for some of the rag-list members at the Legacy table. I had made these cute little name tags to give to the rags I knew were planning on being there. When I didn't find anyone, I decided to put mine on and maybe someone would see me and identify themselves. I began making my way back to my seat and saw my friend and daughter moving our things to look for a better seat. I wasn't sure if the "better seat" was one with a good view or one that was

far away from me. I have been known to get a little over-excited at Rich concerts, which can be pretty embarrassing to those around me. They found seats with a better view and even let me sit with them. There was a guy sitting with three empty seats beside him. It looked like he was saving them, but he told us he was alone and invited us to join him. He said he had dinner with the Ragamuffins before the concert. We asked him where.

(The church basement.) He told us he really liked Brennan Manning's books and asked if I had read any of them. I told him I had read them all and was very fond his writing. When Rich first got into Brennan Manning I bought one his tape series assuming I would enjoy it as much as Rich did. I am very challenged by and love Brennan's writings, but his speaking is very hard for me to pay attention to. I brought my tape set hoping to find someone who may want it. The man we were sitting by was delighted to get them.

After I settled down a bit, I noticed the huge cross right in the center at the front of the church. It was a perfect setting for TJR tour. The cross reminded me of the one on the CD cover.

The concert started. After several songs, I realized I was so caught up again that I was forgetting to do things (like take notes for you all). I found with the Ragamuffins (as with Rich, and Mitch alike) that I like to hear what they say just as much as the music they

play. I
tend to get way too wordy when reporting a concert because I add
all of my
opinions rather than state only the facts.
So on my honor, I will try to do my best to God and my ragamuffins
not to
put you to sleep. PLEASE forgive me if I fail.

Rick Elias was what I would call the "lead singer" for the
evening, although
he never made that claim. It was just an observation and I'm sure
he would
just as soon be lumped in with the rest of the Muffins. I must
confess
right here at the start that I had bought Rick's "Ten Short
Stories" way
back when it first came out. The musical style was not my
preference; and I
never had given him another chance. I had seen him before with
Rich; but
when I saw him tonight I had come with a more open mind and was
ready to
give him the fair chance he served.

I will try to spare the song line-up since that is usually pretty
close to
other locations on the tour. What I like to cover are my personal
observations and things that the Band shared personally.

"Hard To Get" (Where I began taking notes) - Rick said now that
they had The
Jesus Record songs out of the way, they could go ahead and play
some of the
other songs they enjoyed playing with Rich.

"Boy Like You, Man Like Me" - They played it in a totally
different style
than I had heard. I REALLY liked it. It had a great beat. Maybe
they

should record it that way - hint hint.

"The Color Green" (Rick) - It was during this song that I realized I could not leave the concert without thanking Rick and the Band personally for choosing to go ahead with the project and the tour. They didn't have to do it. I'm sure (in one way) it would have been easier to just call it quits and throw in the towel. But they didn't. I realized that their choice to continue was helping me work through my own grief process. So many of us feel our time with Rich was cut short and I knew tonight's concert would bring some sort of "closure." (Oh, how I hate that word!) What I didn't expect was the "breath of fresh air" that it would bring. It's like the bulb had been in the ground long enough, and it was high time it come out to prove that something actually has been happening down there under all that dark and cold soil. I had previously set in my mind and heart that tonight was not going to be a "Rich" concert. What I didn't think about is that these guys have talents and sweet spirits of their own that have been there all along and I just hadn't noticed it before. I knew THEY weren't there to try to imitate Rich, but I also knew it would be hard for me not to compare them to him. It was a pleasant and welcome surprise to me that I WASN'T comparing them. I was just enjoying the excellent job Rick and the Muffins were doing on all the songs throughout the night. - I'm not a rocket

scientist, but there were times during the concert that I thought I heard a background track playing. I could have sworn I heard a hammered dulcimer, but I didn't see Michael playing it. (Maybe it was Rich - woooo!)

At this point, Rick mentioned Reed Arvin, who had been instrumental in Rich's "success" (I hate that word, too). Reed had produced many of Rich's CD's. Rick told us that just last week Reed found out he has cancer. A cantaloupe-sized tumor, along with other things, had to be removed. He said that he IS in an encouraging condition though. He asked us to pray for Reed, specifically for healing and to develop a closer walk with God through this time of trial. I am passing this request along to you all because I know you do not take these requests lightly. (I feel a fast coming on. Anyone care to join me? E-mail me personally at sawoodsy@spiff.net if so.) Rick then said the next song would be appropriate. . . "Nothing Is Beyond You."

"Nothing Is Beyond You" - Rick said Amy is prettier than he is, and said something to the effect that we would just have to put up with him tonight or go to a big rock star show if we wanted to see pretty. Rebecca may remember this part better than I do. They had made comments about some sort of sound device that was making it hard to hear the audience. They said we would have to yell especially loud so they could

hear us. When Rick made the "big rock star show" comment, I hollered out an embarrassing yell, "We thought this was a big rock star show!" Well, they still didn't hear me, and asked me to repeat it. Needing no encouragement, naturally I repeated it louder; and they heard it that time. But Rick let me know that it was not a "big rock star show."

"Man of No Reputation" (Mark introduced Rick - He said, "You will notice on TJR there are ten songs, but on The Jesus Demos there are only nine. It is because Rich would not sing the song he felt could only be sung by its own writer, Rick Elias." Rick thanked Mark for the very kind introduction. Rick said that this song he wrote at a very low point in his life. He didn't know if he had a place in Christian music or if he could make a living for his family at it. But Rich believed in him and said it was one of his favorite songs. He said Rich would make him sing it everywhere they went - just like a proud parent (or an older brother) would.

"If I Stand" (Aaron Smith) - Aaron quoted Ephesians 6:10-18. This is the only time during the whole evening that I got teary-eyed. I began speculating that out of everything that was said and done here tonight, Rich would feel this was the most important thing we could hear. IMHO it was the one song that we as an audience could not, for the life of us, make sound good. Having Rich there to sing it for us sure would have been a nice touch. Ours was a very weak and "ragamuffin-ish" version. We

butchered it
up to say the least. But ironically enough, it was our own
weakness that
made the moment so strong for me. It was definitely one of those
times when
I could hear Rich saying loud and clear, "You guys sound
terrible!" (edited
version, he he, ha ha).

Rick encouraged us to sing with them throughout the show. He said
that The
Ragamuffin Band were just "participants" in the show, not
"performers." He
reminded us that we were in a worship service.

The Legacy of A Kid Brother of St. Frank -
Rick pointed out that Rich was better than anyone else at
deflecting
the spotlight of celebrityism. He told us how Rich invested his
life in so
many non-musical endeavors, which is why he moved to the
reservation. Jim
Dunning, Jr (accountant and manager), David Mullins and Alyssa and
John
Loukota are carrying out Rich's intentions. Rick said, "The
Ragamuffin's
goal is not to deify Rich, but to glorify Christ and to help
support the
ongoing mission that Rich had started while he was here. Rick
then
introduced (What a surprise!) . . .

David Mullins
David said he wanted the lights turned down. He said, "I'm a
preacher so I
like to watch people sleep while a talk. He explained how Rich
and Beaker
had tried to follow the example that St. Francis had set.
They tried to live in poverty, chastity and obedience; and tried

to mentor
and draw other people to do the same. He said "Kid Brothers"
starts where
Rich ended. Rich moved to Window Rock on a Navajo Reservation
because he
saw people in great need and wanted to bring hope to these people.
He
wanted to open up an opportunity for them to have the arts and
some extras
that they would not otherwise have. He wanted to open these
opportunities
to those kids on reservations, as well as in urban cities. David
said that
he
himself went to Albuquerque to work with about 50 4th-6th graders.
College
kids taught classes, but David and Alyssa took the arts to them.
When he
found that his job was to help them paint face masks, he had
visions of
paint everywhere and the room a mess. In actuality, he found that
these
kids painted great and even came back in their free time in the
evening. He
said they intend to hold a week-long camp in July. Some goals are
to open
an Art Center in Wichita and have other branches in other
locations. The
kids will sell their own stuff and make their own money. He said
he went
into a Navajo trading post. They had beautiful rugs that were
priced at
\$2000. When he asked the women who were weaving how much they
would make on
them they they said about \$80. Figure up how much the middle man
is making
here. The goal of the "Legacy" is to cut out the "trading posts"
and let
the people have what they worked for. He said some people feel
the goals

of the "Legacy" are too evangelical. Others feel they are not evangelical enough. He said their goal is, through prayer, to allow God to lead them where He will, and to love people on the way. He said that Jesus taught us to love. God sent his Son; and the best way he proved who His Son was, was by loving. When He saw the withered hand, He stretched it out and it was healed. Then He stopped there and went His way. Jesus didn't say, "Now as long as you do right, I'll heal you." Nor did He say, "As long as you keep going on the straight and narrow, you'll remain healthy." God heals us, not for what we can do for Him, but because He loves us. Jesus' hope in healing your hand is that it will heal your heart. That by loving and helping you, you will see that He is the Son of God. But, if you don't realize that, His hope is that you go on out and use that hand to do something that you enjoy here in this life. David said that their prayer is that if they fail, they would fail miserably, but if they succeed, then they succeed God will receive the glory. He said you can help in a few ways. 1) If you have an instrument that you bought intending to learn it and haven't, send it to them. 2) Go to a Reckless Abandon Spiritual Retreat - Indianapolis-First Christian (June); Wichita-(Sept); and Phoenix (Oct or Nov). \$35. fee 3) Go back to the Legacy Table and check it out.

*MY CHALLENGE TO YOU RAGAMUFFINS IS THIS: Consider supporting the

Legacy of

A Kid Brother of St. Frank on a monthly basis. I began supporting them as soon as I heard about their efforts. What if there are 200 subscribers and we each support them with \$5 a month? That's \$1000. But, I'm sure some of us could give even more? Imagine what we could do for a cause we already know we believe in. Just do me a favor and think about it.

End of Part I

Intermission

"Screen Door" (the cups) - As far as I could see, it was done perfectly.

Mark said that Rich would give them about 50 or 60 songs he wanted them to learn, so they'd work real hard and learn them; and then, when it came time to play, he'd add some and cut some. "He'd always cut the ones we knew."

"Here In America"

Rick said they had never played it live with Rich before.

"Elijah"

Carl, the Jr. Muffin said this was one of his favorite Rich songs. He did an excellent job on it. It really surprised me that ANYONE could sing it and make it sound good. But he made it sound great.

Jimmy A. said he's in his mid-40's . Sometimes he wakes up and doesn't even like music. He said Rich wrote a lot of songs that remind him that singing together is like unshaven men and weaklings doing the best they

can with what they have. He thanked the church for their hospitality.

Someone on stage said they felt like they had said thank you about 400

times. Throughout the night they would say, "One of our favorite Rich songs

is . . . " Rick said that being a Christian doesn't take away our hurt. It

doesn't even speed up our grief process. They constantly reminded us that

we are all in this worship experience together and they would invite us to

sing

along over and over.

"Step By Step" - All together and very powerful.

Jimmy A. - Said that they loved Rich; but what he did was to give glory to

Christ. He talked about Rich not having a home and what it's like not

having a home in Christian music. But for just a few minutes you find home

in singing a song together. We are worshipping God. He said, "I am a weak

person and sometimes my nights are dismal. My wife wonders why I'm not at

home. My kid's don't get it. Life is hard for EVERYBODY. Bound to Come

Some Trouble is a song that helps you make it through. He said, "which we

aren't going to sing tonight, 'cause we don't know it."

(laughter). He

said to run headlong into the arms of Christ. One way we can do that is by

singing together.

"Peace"

This Train's music must be a little "young" (or something) for me.

I just
don't get it. Since it is usually a little LOUD, I can't even
tell what
Mark's voice sound like. But when he sang tonight, I heard him
(and not all
the other stuff!) He has really got a beautiful voice.

"Calling Out Your Name" (Rick - wow!)
"Everywhere I Go" (Very Powerful!)
"Awesome God"

"Creed"
Even those who enjoy "perfect" and "polished" productions would
have noticed
this one.

Encore - The "Spice-girls" were introduced. It was hilarious.
Wish you all
could have been there. With the exception of those who may be
rubbed the
wrong way. (Got a chance to talk with Rick a few minutes after
the concert
and had a little chuckle over the spice girl thing.) Hope I
didn't touch on
any sore spots here.

"That Where I Am"
Male parts led by Rick, female parts by Gingermuffin (Carl).
Rick told the signers (sign language) that they were the funkiest
signers he
had ever seen. It was really funny. He started doing some of
their
actions. Then Mark said he thought they had a mimers following
there
tonight also.

We ended with (you guessed it) Doxology.

After the concert I wanted to find Michael to say hi to him. You
may

remember I got to join Mitch and the Kid Brothers in Springfield for Sunday School in March. Because I spent so much time looking for him (and getting side-tracked up in the balcony just staring at that cross), I missed getting to personally tell Jimmy and Aaron thank you. We got a group picture, but it was crowded around us and a lot was going on. My friend told me that Jim was impressed with my Ragamuffin Name Tags, but she didn't know anything about them except that I stuck one on her and told her not to take it off. I wish so much that I could have told them personally what a great privilege it was to worship with them.

I think Rich would have been pleased with the way things went. (Only speculation I realize.)

Love in Christ,
Robin "really weird" Woodson

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[RichMailList 236]: Upland, IN 04/17 review

↑ kidbrothers.net/rmml/rmml236.html

Date: 04 May 1999

To: RichMailList

Subject: [RichMailList 236]: Upland, IN 04/17 review

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Subject: Upland Review

From: [Tim M Francis](#)

Date: Tue, 20 Apr 1999 06:59:35 EDT

Danl,

The Ragamuffin band played Rediger Chapel at Taylor University April 17th, 1999. It was a cold and rainy Saturday night, but things got hot inside real quick. They opened with the song of the year My Deliverer and moved quickly to Surely God is With Us. Mark Robertson then shared they had gone high tech and all had these little personal monitoring devices in their ears. The only problem he said was they couldn't hear the crowd very well. So he asked us to be twice as loud when we were heckling or cheering. They introduced the next song as a hillbilly song "not that there are any hills around here" and played an incredible version of You Did Not Have a Home switching vocal parts back and forth quickly and flawlessly. Rick then shared about the week before Rich

died. They spent some time together in the hogon that Rich built with his own two hands and listened to Rich's demos for the new album. The first song Rich played him was Hard to Get. They played it beautifully. It was very moving. Next a woman from the audience (Angie) joined them on stage as they played Boy Like Me / Man Like You. Angie played the penny whistle part. It was great. Rick made a joke about her being a trio as she is pregnant with twins! She did a great job. It really added to the night. Next up was The Color Green. Rich's intro was played on a recording and then cut out as the song began with Rick's 12 string filling in nicely. Next they shared some disturbing news about Reed Arvin. Doctors just removed a cantaloupe sized tumor from his body. The news was not as bad as it could be, but not as well as they hoped. They asked us to pray for Reed and then dedicated Nothing is Beyond you to him, saying nothing was beyond God including physical healing. Rick also said that the Ragamuffins did not sing this as pretty as Amy and were not as easy to look at either. Still it was a fine rendition of a great song. Mark then introduced Man of No Reputation as a song Rich refused to sing. Rich felt it was a song that could be sung only by its writer. Mark said we were in luck because its writer was here and Rick began the song solo, but by the end everyone was playing along. Aaron

then came out from behind the drums and quoted from Ephesians Chapter 6 about the armor of God. He led the crowd in a powerful version of If I Stand. Kathy Sprinkle then came out and talked about Rich's continuing work through the Legacy and the Kid Brother's of St. Frank. There was a short intermission and then the band came back with Screen door. Aaron, Jimmy, Carl, and Mark stood at the table with the cups. It wasn't quite flawless. Let's just say before the end of the song Jimmy had his face down on the table pounding it with his fists. And I think you'll understand who had a little problem. It was hilarious. When they completed the song the crowd roared and Rick said "Don't do that. It'll only encourage them." they then shared how Rich had a fear of rehearsal.

2 days before a major tour Rich would give them a list of 60 songs to learn and then after they learned them change 58 of them. Next the band played Here in America. I think Rick might have had his capo on the wrong fret and there could have been some other problems as well. Jimmy jumped to the mic claiming he had one other thing to share. (laughing) And the band stops and Rick looks at him and says "Nice save!" It was funny. they did play it beautifully though and followed it with Sing Your Praise to the Lord. carl then did a solo version of Elijah. It was great! I think he might have the best voice of the bunch. Jimmy then led us in singing Hold Me Jesus. Next was one of my very

favorites:

Peace from the Liturgy/Legacy album. Then another intro recorded for
Calling Out Your Name. I missed Mitch and Michael on that one,
but I got
to see them the next night! But that's another review. I See You
was
next with Aaron's drums beating right through you. Then Mark sang
Awesome God and Rick sang Creed. Then as Mark was talking someone
yelled
a request for Monster Truck. There was some joking and Rick said
wait
till you hear their next album.....then you'll be sorry.
Kidding of
course. Then they taught the guys and girls parts for That Where
I Am.
It was good to sing along with that one. They closed with
Sometimes by
Step and the Doxology. It was a great night. A great show. The
sound
was near perfect. A night to remember. Thanks guys!

Tim Francis

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[RichMailList 238]: Austin, TX 05/13 review

↑ kidbrothers.net/rmml/rmml238.html

Date: 14 June 1999

To: RichMailList

Subject: [RichMailList 238]: Austin, TX 05/13 review

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From: [Shannon Belcher](#)

Subject: Ragamuffins - Austin, TX 5/13

Date: Fri, 14 May 1999 16:11:14

The Ragamuffins - Austin, Texas 5/13 The Promiseland Theater

Nutshell version: an absolutely wonderful experience, if you have the opportunity, GO!

In "detail": The concert followed the same layout that's been reported in other reviews so I'll concentrate on the differences and personal impact. Unfortunately(?), it was a small crowd >300 (guessing) - the guys and the music deserve so much more. But those that were there were really there (for the music, the worship) and that seemed the most important thing. This was my first experience to see the group or hear the music in a live setting.

Chris Taylor opened with 4 songs, starting with "Learn to Pray" - like dcTalk, his music comes off very differently in a live setting than studio.

I was mouthing the words to "LtP" when he got to the line "learn to pray down the barrel of another loaded gun" and I just froze as I realized the new impact to those words in light of Columbine HS and the young woman shot after being asked if she believed in God. I wonder what goes through his mind now when he performs it? I believe the remaining songs were all off of his new album "Down Goes the Day" (including the title track). It was difficult to understand the lyrics last night so I went to his website this morning - some really amazing stuff. He put on a good show in spite of the fact that we were a small group.

Okay, the main event . . . the concert itself was a little rocky from a technical standpoint because right before the show they lost their usual soundman (Jordan Richter?) to a rather aggressive steak fajita and the crew did some quick shuffling of duties. After the concert I talked with his brother (?) -- sorry guys, if you're reading this and I have it totally messed up, please forgive me! -- who said that he was okay and missed the show mainly as a precaution. However, in the total picture, the technical issues just didn't matter!

The usual suspects were there: Rick Elias, Mark Robertson, Jimmy Abegg, Aaron Smith, and, I think, Carl Hengesell (there were no intros and I'm not familiar enough with them to place all the faces). Again, if I'm wrong -

please correct the above and excuse the error! The only additions to previous messages on the concert format are: a) an interesting story about Mark Robertson and Rich going to see Kitty Wells at the "Broken Spoke" (a country dance hall here in Austin) and b) it looked like they got the cup sequence right (but that was the first time I'd seen it)! The major item I want to get across is how incredible it was to hear the music played live and among others who know the songs. There was a man in front of me, there by himself, stayed quietly to himself, but you could tell that the music was important to him, that he was there to quietly, unassumingly, worship through the music. I've always had a desire to hear the music performed live by people who were part of its creation (first Rich, now the Rags) and now I understand why. It really lives. Very little can compare to the experience of singing these songs ("calling out your name", "if I stand", "hold me Jesus") with a group of believers and led by really great musicians - my apologies to any standing around me, I'm definitely NOT Kim Hill, Amy Grant, etc. . . I was shocked at my emotional reaction to "Sometimes by Step" - barely able to hold back the tears. Even "sing your praise. ." and "awesome God" - songs I've liked but never been nuts about - became special and I saw their true attraction (and power). Speaking of power - Aaron Smith, absolutely marvelous on drums/percussion - really made "creed". Although I didn't stay to talk with the

Rags, I did
talk to Cobra Joe and it sounds like the next "This Train" album
should be a
blast - turning even more to the rockabilly/swing sound. Look for
it in
July. If there was one thing I could say to everyone behind the
production:
thank you. Thank you for continuing the mission - thank you for
taking the
time out of your own careers and lives and taking the financial
risk to
continue the music and the message. Last night was a blessing and
a joy.
Shannon Belcher

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[RichMailList 242]: Phoenix, AZ 05/18 review

↑ kidbrothers.net/rmml/rmml242.html

Date: 07 July 1999

To: RichMailList

Subject: [RichMailList 242]: Phoenix, AZ 05/18 review

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Date: Wed, 16 Jun 1999 15:54:14

Subject: Phoenix Review: 5/18 Ragamuffin Concert

From: [Celia LaPaglia](#)

Hi Danl

Here is a review of the 5/18 Phoenix Ragamuffin concert written by Todd Dufek. If possible please add to your archives. Thanks so much!

Peace in Christ,
Celia

"Jesus - write me into Your story - whisper it to me
And let me know I'm Yours" Rich Mullins

-----5/18/99 PHOENIX RAGAMUFFIN CONCERT REVIEW-----

"Uplifting. Haunting. Encouraging and filled with wisdom; a passion for Christ that lives beyond the life of Rich Mullins, now gone."

These simple words and phrases describe the indelible impressions left with me following the Ragamuffin Band's performance on May 18th at St. Jerome's Catholic Church in Phoenix.

No, this will not be an ordinary review of the concert. Those have already been done with great competence and flair. And if you've read them you know who opened for the Ragamuffins and what songs Rich's band performed for an audience in love with his music.

Rewind about three years. My wife put on a cassette tape that contained music that resonated through the house. It spoke with a simplicity and elegance that told of God's creation ("The Color Green") and peeked into the early years of our Savior's life in a way I had never fathomed ("Boy Like Me").

When I asked who the artist was and my wife told me I said, "Rich who?"
I had never heard his music.

Anyone on the spiritual road to know Christ better, to walk in humanity as He did, knows the struggle, the turmoil of hard times fraught with tests. And how distant God can seem when we need Him most. But the songs I heard from the cassette deck ("Nothing is Beyond You," "Hard to Get," "Hold Me Jesus") comforted and encouraged me. And they did the same that balmy night in May.

And when God has given my wife and I blessings, including our daily bread and luxuries we never asked for, Rich's music ("Awesome God," "Sing Praise to the Lord") has deepened our gratitude. In another song - "Creed" - he gives us the reminder that, "I did not make

it, no
it is making me. It is the very truth of God, not the invention of
any
man." The reminder? That we are not making ourselves like Christ,
but
His work in our hearts regenerates us so that we can be more like
Him.

My two favorite songs on The Jesus Record are "My Deliverer is
Coming"
and "A Man of No Reputation." Songs I reveled in as I heard them
performed by the Ragamuffin Band. The first is a promise of
Christ's
return in the light of our doubts, whereas "A Man of No
Reputation" is a
reminder of the power that Christ had at his disposal. Yet he made
the
choice to heal and love those poor in spirit.

The concert closed with the Doxology and an empty stage. The
audience
was left to ponder the songs they'd heard. And the man God used to
bring
them to a small church beside a heavily traveled road in a major
city.
Finally, and most importantly, there was a mixture of loss and God
glorified that I believe deeply touched everyone in attendance.

Written by Todd Dufek

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[RichMailList 240]: Richland, WA 05/27 review

↑ kidbrothers.net/rmml/rmml240.html

Date: 04 July 1999

To: RichMailList

Subject: [RichMailList 240]: Richland, WA 05/27 review

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Date: Sun, 30 May 1999 13:52:20

From: [Keith](#)

Subject: Ragamuffins

Richland, Washington May 27th, 1999

I have no idea where to begin and exactly how to put into words the blessing and blast we had at the Ragamuffin's concert. One thing needs to set straight though, it wasn't really a "concert", it was more of a worship service led by the Ragamuffins. Rick shared that yes, the tour, Homeless Man tour, was in honor of Rich Mullins but was more then that. He went on to explain it was about praise, honor and glory to God, the God that Rich served and loved. The concert was in a local church, I guess about 250-300 folks were there.

Started out trying to take some notes but that was pretty much gone by the third or fourth song as we got into the worship. At times the

Ragamuffins would stop playing and listen (and let us hear) to the crowd singing whatever they were singing. All during the concert (service) the Ragamuffins encouraged us to sing and worship with them.

Rick, Jimmy A., Aaron, and Mark did such a great job! They also did a "drill routine" with plastic water glasses, sort of a Mr. Pringles cans thing, you know, popping, slapping, and slamming them, as they sang "Screen Door", passing the glasses back and forth as they sang. They did great!

We posted a few pictures from the concert at the station's web site (<http://www.waymusic.com/archive/rgmnconc.htm>) and click on the concert link. And there's more on the way as soon as I get them developed. I had asked to take pictures for the web page and all, their response was "sure, all you want". The reason I mention that was as an example of their "personableness". Some artists have said, "you can only take two or three" or have said "no pics!" but these guys were so approachable. All of them have been around a long time and could easily tire of all the attention but they hung out even before the concert as well as after. And speaking of "attention", Rick went on and on about encores , he said bands that do encores should be arrested and put in prison for a long time. We'll jump to the end, when he said, "this was the last song...it was". But they ended it in the usual Rich fashion (so I hear since I never got to see him

in
concert), as we sang and worshiped, they stopped playing and
walked off the
stage. It was dramatic for me as I had my eyes closed and when I
opened
them, they were gone.

I like concerts with all the glitter, smoke and lights, the
rotating
drum sets and all but you know; sometimes we can be blown out of
the water
by the simple set. And this one does just that.

So, if you get the shot to see them, don't miss it! And call
those
radio stations! I had a chance to chat with Rick E. a little and
he was
saying that some of the Nashville stations said they were not
going to play
Ragamuffins as they didn't have a listening base but as Rick said,
"Rich
and his music was and is pretty much "industry proof" and they
didn't
really care but would continue to do what they were doing".

Later
Lord Bless & Abide (He promised)
Keith

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Home Tribute Book

When Rich Mullins went home to the Lord, he left behind a spiritual and artistic legacy that touched many. On Sept. 19, 1997, Rich and fellow musician Mitch McVicker were travelling southbound on I-39 near Peoria, Ill., to a benefit concert in Wichita, Kan. They lost control of their jeep and flipped. They were thrown onto the road. The driver of a rig swerved to miss the jeep, but hit Rich.

McVicker, 24, suffered serious head and internal injuries. Rich was dead at 41.

Throughout his career, his dogged grip on what was good and true meant Christians from many different denominations found hope and meaning in his songs and ministry.

Rich Wayne Mullins was born Oct. 21, 1955, in Richmond, Ind. The third of John and Neva Mullins' six children - four boys and two girls - Rich was raised on his parents' Indiana farm.

Rich's musical training began at an early age. His great-grandmother taught him hymns while he learned to play the piano from Mary Kellner. Rich considered Kellner to be one of his greatest musical influences, not only for teaching him to play and introducing him to the great masters, but also for sparking his passion and imagination about what he was learning. He is said to have written his first song on the piano at age 4. As a teenager, he wrote songs while driving a tractor in the fields on his father's farm.

He graduated from Northeastern High School in 1974. As a student at Cincinnati Bible College, Rich joined Zion Ministries and sang in the pop-vocal quartet Zion. Though he was the only member to pursue music as a vocation, in 1981, the group - through a generous grant from Rich's uncle - independently produced an album, Behold the Man. The record, sold

almost exclusively at Zion's concerts and long out of print, featured Rich solo on one song, "Heaven In His Eyes." The rest featured either group performances or duets.

That same year, the group performed at Nashville's Koinonia Coffeehouse, and Reunion Records' Mike Blanton heard a tape. He soon signed Rich to a publishing deal.

In 1983, Amy Grant recorded Rich's "Sing Your Praise to the Lord" for Age to Age. Within a short time, the song was seemingly absorbed into the American hymnody. Grant continued to champion Rich as a writer, recording "Doubly Good to You" for Straight Ahead and "Love of Another Kind" for Unguarded.

Rich signed his first recording contract and released Rich Mullins, his debut on Reunion Records (the label founded by Grant's managers) in 1985. The simple cover art indicated his self-deprecating humor, with a cover portrait that included only part of his face and left his name on his T-shirt a tangled mess from behind his folded arms. The album's lyrics portrayed a rare honesty. As Rich sings in "A Few Good Men": Show me someone who knows how to struggle/ Who isn't caught in the hold of his luxuries/ I just need to see/ Someone who was made for trouble/ Who could come and help shape our destiny.

With his second record, *Pictures in the Sky*, Christian music fans began to notice Rich in earnest. "Screen Door" was an unlikely hit (with its a cappella doo-wop arrangement and catchy "hand-clap-finger-snap-knee-slap" rhythm) that was very different from usual Christian radio fare. "Verge of a Miracle" was also a success, full of crisp, shimmery sounds and words full of optimism without resorting to platitudes.

With *Winds of Heaven*, *Stuff of Earth*, Rich learned to express himself in a way that was simpler, yet still had depth. "The Other Side of the World" was a compelling reminder that the Kingdom of God is built by "the least of these." In "If I Stand," he used spare instrumentation to underscore his longing to live a life of faith, grace, and peace. "Awesome God," a simple song expressing the grandest of truths, had the biggest impact: Churches everywhere incorporated the song into their worship, and almost overnight Rich became one of the biggest names in Christian music. While other artists chose to move closer to the inside of the industry, Rich moved away. Having lived in Nashville since the beginning of his career, he moved to

Wichita to take part in the ministry of the Rev. Maurice Howard at Wichita's Central Christian Church.

Although Howard passed away a few months after Rich moved to Kansas, Rich stayed on, basing his music and ministry from Central Christian Church. He wanted to coordinate his mission work with his musical career. He moved into a house with lifelong friend and musical collaborator Beaker.

With Never Picture Perfect, Rich delved deeper into his musical heritage and personal experience to make art with a universal appeal. "While the Nations Rage" went hand in hand with "The Other Side of the World" challenging Christians to not turn a blind eye to social injustice. "First Family" offered a tribute to his parents. On songs like "My One Thing" and "Hope to Carry On," Rich mixed in folk instruments like Appalachian hammered dulcimer and mandolin, while more driving rock energy began showing up in his music.

While his "celebrity" status continued to rise, Rich often shifted the focus off himself, stepping out of the limelight. He'd often join an audience before a show. In rural Missouri, Rich came into the auditorium while the house lights were still up, guitar in hand. "The show's not starting just yet," he said, "but while we're waiting, I wanted to teach you this song we'll be doing later. It's a new one, so you probably haven't heard it before." Then he took the audience through the chorus to "Sometimes By Step" one line at a time until they had it down.

He toured relentlessly to bring his music to the public. The shows were almost entirely acoustic (years before "unplugged" became a trend) and featured supporting acts as Rich's band, trading off on a multitude of instruments, including hammered dulcimer, accordion, and all manner of ethnic percussion. For the rhythm on "Screen Door," in a marvelous feat of choreography, they employed bar stools and plastic cups. They usually opened the show with a rendition of Handel's "Hallelujah" chorus sung a cappella and arranged in The Beach Boy's style.

The spirit of these shows was closely reflected in Rich's two-volume album The World As Best As I Remember It. The first disc opened with the strains of bagpipes and a boy soprano singing the plaintive prayer: O God, You are my God/ And I will ever praise You/ I will seek You in the morning/ I will learn to walk in Your ways/ And step by step You'll lead me/ And I will follow

You all of my days.

Rich expressed on these discs a glimpse not only of the state of the world, but also of himself, from celebrating the incarnation of Christ in "Boy Like Me/Man Like You" or "The Maker of Noses" to the broken spirit longing for eternity in "Calling Out Your Name" and "The River."

During this period, there were rumors of Rich's retirement from music. He often spoke of his interest in being a missionary and teaching music to children. When Beaker married and moved away in 1993, Rich cut back his concert and recording schedule to study music education at Friends University in Wichita. He then moved in with Friends' campus chaplain and theology professor Jim Smith and his family.

For A Liturgy, a Legacy, and a Ragamuffin Band, Rich retained much of the musical spirit of his previous two records, while drawing on the influences and musical friendships of his "Ragamuffin Band." Each of the members - Jimmy Abegg, Rich Elias, Phil Madeira, Lee Lundgren, Aaron Smith, and Billy Crockett - had musical careers of their own. The high profile band spread the spotlight around, making Rich less the focus.

The record consisted of two parts: Part one ("the Liturgy") was destined to convey the idea of a liturgy, or an order of worship; part two ("the Legacy") was conceived as an expression of the tension of being a Christian in America.

"Growing up in a non-liturgical church," Rich had said, "we though we were non-liturgical. But when I look back, we definitely had one. You know, like the Call to Worship, Hymn of Praise, Prayer Hymn, Prayer Time, Offering, Sermon ... this thing that we follow. There is something very exciting to me about singing hymns that people have been singing for generations."

He said if we believe in the communion of the saints, then it is not only communion with the saints that are still in the Body, but also with the saints of old. So, he said, it connects us with a lot more people.

In 1995, after receiving his degree in Music Education from Friends University, Rich took a big step: he moved to the reservation near Window Rock, Ariz., to teach music to the children on the Navajo reservation. One of his goals was to organize a choir that might go on the road with him.

His life at Window Rock was represented somewhat on Brother's Keeper,

is second record with the Ragamuffins. The album featured artwork and photos inspired by and taken on the reservation. It was also the first record where Rich held the producer's credit, shared with the other members of the band.

The words captured a compelling picture of grace and redemption, as in "Wounds of Love": Well, if passion can lead to prayer/ Then maybe prayer can give us faith/ And if faith is all we got/ Then maybe faith is all we need.

Once the record was out, he put that faith to the test, cutting most of his ties to the first decade of his career. He ended his decade-long relationship with Reunion Records and with his longtime manager. He spent a good deal of time just concentrating on his work in New Mexico and playing a few shows here and there.

Reunion issued Songs, featuring many of Rich's biggest hits, plus three new recordings (a remake of Rich's personal favorite, "Elijah," his own recording of the ever-popular "Sing Your Praise to the Lord," and the buried gem "We Are Not As Strong As We Think We Are").

During this independent period, Rich wrote and recorded Cantic of the Plains, a musical based on the life and legend of St. Francis of Assisi, set in the American Old West. While most of Rich's records had some underlying theme, this was the first to have a "story" sketched out in the liner notes and fleshed out as a drama. He produced the record with Ragamuffin and This Train bassist Mark Robertson, and wrote the songs with Beaker and Mitch McVicker. However, Rich didn't actually sing on this project; the "parts" were sung by the different cast members. Mitch sang the role of Frank, a disillusioned veteran of the Civil War who returns home seeking God's greater plan. Michael Tait sang the role of Buzz, a former slave anxious to find the meaning of freedom. Kevin Smith portrayed Ivory, a childhood friend of Frank's intrigued by the change that has come over his friend. Leigh Nash rounds out the cast as Clare, the love who gives Frank up so he can pursue the purpose laid before him by God.

A month before his death, Rich signed a new recording contract with Myrrh Records. He was scheduled to go into the studio in October with Rick Elias to work on The Jesus Record, for June 1998. He submitted a demo tape of rough home recordings of the songs to be included on the finished disc.

As a tribute to Rich's legacy, the Ragamuffin Band (headed by producer

and guitarist Rich Elias) plans to record and sing the songs themselves to help continue the work Rich began during his lifetime.

There were four memorial services held for Rich. On Sept. 26, a Nashville service was held at Christ Presbyterian Church. The next day, a service was held at Wichita State University's Henry Levitt Arena with more than 5,000 people in attendance. On Oct. 13, a memorial service was held on the reservation in Window Rock, Ariz. Then, on Oct. 15, a final service was held in memory of Rich at the Compassion International headquarters in Colorado Springs, Colo.

Canticle of the Plains was the last project Rich completed during his life. As with all of Rich's concerts, Canticle of the Plains ends with a period of worship to the Father. It is fitting that Rich would leave us with this final admonition to keep our attention and our adoration squarely focused on our Creator, Redeemer, and Inspirer.

Rich told the truth.

And now he is free.

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